



American-style Brie

The American-style Brie differs from its French ancestry by leading a more stable life. By that we mean that it can sit in your fridge 3-4 weeks longer than its cousin before turning into a runny, and ever stronger tasting cheese. This is also a cheese that will dazzle you and your friends. Brie seems very hard to make when you first look at a recipe. The cooking is straightforward and with proper attention to the ripening of the white mold during the first week, it pretty much takes care of itself during maturation. You will need a ripening box for a clean, humidity controlled ripening chamber if you do not have a cave. Plan on maturing this cheese for 4-6 weeks before serving. The maturation phase takes place in a regular refrigerator, while the cheese is wrapped in cheese paper.

Ingredients

2 gallons Whole Cow Milk

4 oz Heavy Cream

(neither milk nor cream can be ultra-pasteurized)

1/16 tsp. MA4001 Culture

1/8 tsp. Thermophilic B Culture

1/8 tsp. Penicillium Candidum

1/8 tsp. Geotrichum Candidum -15 or 17

1/4 tsp. Calcium Chloride solution in 1/4 cup water

1/4 tsp. liquid Rennet in 1/4 cup water

Diamond Crystal Kosher Salt

Equipment

Water Bath sized Kettle (4-7 gal.) (or use one side of a double sink)

Inset pan (stainless steel) to hold 2 gallons of milk plus cream

2 Thermometers with Dial Tops

Perforated Ladle or Plastic Colander with handle

Curd Cutting Knife

Brie mold - size 8" diameter, with bottom

Plastic Ripening Box with Lid and Draining Tray

Extra Large Cheese Wrapping Paper

Measuring spoons

2 small bowls or ramekins

Quart size Measuring Cup

Iodophor Sanitizer mixed in small pail of cool water or plain boiling water to sanitize equipment

Method

1. Mix and gently warm milk and cream to 90°F in your inset pan set into the water with water at 102°F. Turn off the heat. Add both Cultures and Candidum powders sprinkled on the top. Stir using top/ bottom strokes for 20 strokes. The temperature of the milk should be allowed to rise to 96°-98°F, which should leave the water bath at 100°F. Cover the milk and leave for 90 minutes.

2. Add Calcium Chloride and stir. Add the rennet and stir. Leave covered for 30 minutes then perform a clean break test. If the curd isn't ready, cover and wait 15 minutes and recheck.

3. Cut the curds in 3/4" cubes horizontally and vertically (Hazelnut size). Rest the curds for 5 minutes.
4. Stir the curd for 10-15 minutes then settle the curds for 5 minutes. Start removing whey from above the curds with a one quart measuring cup. When you reach the top of the curds, dip in your ladle or plastic strainer and scoop the curds into the brie mold. The mold should be set on the drain tray in the ripening box. Lift out the brie mold and pour off whey periodically.
5. After one hour in the mold, flip the cheese over and replace in the mold. This evens out the drainage and creates a smooth surface on both sides. **(Sanitize your hand to hold the cheese and it will flip cleanly.)**
6. Repeat flipping the cheese about once an hour keeping the mold in the box, and continuing to drain whey. Gradually there will only be a few ounces of whey to drain. Then stop flipping. This may be the 4th or 5th flip. Put a foil cover or lid on the ripening box, vented in two places and move the container onto the cooling phase to 68°F -72°F.
7. Leave in the mold for 8 hours.
8. Drain off the last whey and un-mold the cheese. Sprinkle Kosher salt or similar flake salt on the top, flip and sprinkle on the new top-side. If you imagine salting well a steak or tomato, that is about the right amount. Salting the sides is optional.
9. The blooming phase of storage starts now and is best carried out at 52-56°F. Find a place to put the ripening box, with the lid askew or aluminum foil covering the middle 2/3 of the pan - open at both ends of the top for air circulation. It will take 3-4 days to bloom a thickened white filigree, then you need to turn the wheel over to bloom the other side. This bloom happens quickly, in only one or two days.
10. Using the large size Cheese paper, wrap the wheel - taping closed any awkward edges. Now move the wheel to a clean ripening tray and box with a closed lid. Place one damp paper towel at each of two opposite corners to keep the humidity about 85%. Move this storage tray to a refrigerator 42-48°F. Re-moisten the towels as needed, and turn the wheel over once or twice during the ripening time.
11. The wheel should be ready to cut and serve after 3-4 weeks, but you can check it by cutting out a 1/4" small wedge. Press a small piece of wax paper into the cut section before rewrapping. The cheese should feel soft, beginning to ooze out of the rind and taste and smell mild. Very old Brie will taste very tangy and smell of ammonia.
12. Move the wheel to a cold refrigerator about 38°F to extend its shelf life for 6-8 weeks.

Yield is 2 to 2 1/2 lbs.

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