

BASIC CHEESE RECIPE

We use this recipe more than any other because it is so good and easy! It can be made with one (1) or more gallons of milk. We find the larger the batch, the better the cheese is.

STEP 1:

- Put 1 gallon of milk into a stainless steel or enamel pan. Steel or aluminum pans will affect the cheese adversely. We use our canning pan.
- You can use whole milk, skim, powdered, instant or a combination. If you use powdered or instant milk, mix it and let it stand for 24 hours before using. Also, with powdered or instant milk, you will need 1 cup of cream to 1 gallon of milk to have enough butterfat.

STEP 2:

- Add the starter 1/4 cup cultured buttermilk. Do not use churned buttermilk.

STEP 3:

- Heat the mixture slowly to 90 degrees. Fill your kitchen sink with hot water and it will heat the mixture faster than on the stove. The water temperature should stay around 90 degrees F. Stir the mixture of milk and buttermilk while heating.

STEP 4:

- Add coloring. Use approximately 40 drops. You can use more or less depending on your own preference. Do not use food or candy coloring.

STEP 5:

- Add 1 Junket of rennet tablet per gallon of milk, dissolved in 1/4 cup of cool water. Make sure it is dissolved completely. Add it to the milk and stir well to make sure it is completely mixed in. Do not dissolve tablet until just ready to use. It will lose its strength if dissolved and let to stand.

STEP 6:

- Cover the pan and let the milk set undisturbed for approximately 1/2 hour (or until the curd is formed). The curd will break away from the side of the pan when tilted. Do not get excited if it takes longer to coagulate.

STEP 7:

- Take a long stainless steel knife and cut curd in 1/2 inch strips one way and then turn pan and cut the other way. It will look like a checkerboard.

STEP 8:

- Heat the mixture to 100 degrees F, while stirring with your hand. Stir for 15 minutes during which time the curds separate and settle from the whey.

STEP 9:

- Line a colander with 2 layers of cheese cloth. Strain curds and whey. Press curds to squeeze the whey. Do not press hard enough to compress. Dump the curds into a large bowl and salt to taste (about 1/2 teaspoon per gallon of milk).
- Reline your colander with the same cheese cloth and put the curds in. Overlap the corners on top of the curds so that they are all enclosed in the cheesecloth, and put on your bread board in sink.
- Place a plate upside down on top of the cheese and put a gallon jug filled with water or some other weight on the plate. This will make a nice round piece of **cheese**.
- It can be eaten now as curds or you can let it stand about 12 hours for a firmly pressed cheese. Our family usually has it eaten before the 12 hours has expired!

CHEESE HOOP

- This is an optional step using a #10 can that will not rust (Punch holes from the inside out to prevent catching on the sharp, pointed metal edges. It's easier than you might expect using a short nail held with a pair of pliers.)
- Punch as follows:
 - Rows 3/4" apart with holes 1 1/2" apart, leaving 2" unpunched at top.
 - Punch 12-16 holes in bottom. Remove lid.