



Fresh Cheddar Know-How

Ingredients for 1 gallon batch (or a 3 gallon batch)

- 1 gallon of milk- whole milk is best (3 gallons)
- ¼ teaspoon calcium chloride solution (¾ teaspoon)
- 1 packet Know-How Brews & Foods Mesophilic RA Culture (2 pkts.)
- ½ tablet of rennet (1 tablet)
- Cheese salt

Instructions:

1. Prepare to heat your milk. Pour it into a sanitized stainless steel pot. Place it over low heat. Add the calcium chloride solution to the milk. Gently stir and bring it up to 90° F; maintain this temperature.
 - See Cheesemaking Skill Sheet, #1.
2. Sprinkle the culture over milk surface and let it soak in for 1 or 2 minutes. Gently but thoroughly stir culture into milk. Allow culture to ripen for 60-90 minutes. Continue to hold temperature at 90° F.
3. Make sure you've dissolved the rennet in a few tablespoons of distilled water. Add it to the milk and mix it in thoroughly, for about 1 minute. Now let it sit undisturbed for at least 45 minutes, holding the temperature at 90° F.
4. When you get a clean break, cut the curd.
 - See Cheesemaking Skill Sheet, #2 & 3
5. Allow the curds heal for 5 min. after cutting. Next, you'll have about an hour of close tending, so grab a friend to chat with or a good movie to watch on the side.
6. You are going to "cook" the curds by bringing them slowly up to 102 ° F over the course of about 30 minutes.
 - See Cheesemaking Skill Sheet, #4

7. When the temperature has reached 102° F, stabilize the temperature and hold for an additional 30 minutes, continuing to gently stir every few minutes.
8. Prepare a cheddaring tray. Place a jelly roll sheet or large rectangular cake pan on your stovetop over the lowest possible heat. Be prepared to cycle the stove on and off. Your goal is to keep the curd at around 90° F. Find another pan or large bowl that can be placed over top as a heat retention lid.
9. Now line a large colander with cheesecloth and gently empty your pot into it to drain off the whey. Cover the curds to keep them warm (90° F). After a few minutes of draining, when the curds have begun to “mat” together, you can carefully lift the cheesecloth out and place it (with the curds still on it) onto your cheddaring tray. Cover!
10. After about 15 minutes, slice the mass into large (about 2” thick) slices or blocks and stack them in piles three high. Cover again and monitor the temperature. Try to maintain 90° F. Every 15-20 minutes for about an hour and a half total, turn the blocks over and rotate them in their piles so that different ones are on top each time. Keep covered in between rotations.
11. Cut up the curd blocks into ½ inch cubes. Place in bowl and add ½ - ¾ *tablespoon* of cheese salt per gallon of milk. Gently stir curds.
12. The curds may be consumed fresh (place in a sealed container and refrigerate).
13. If you want a block of hard cheddar cheese, you can press your curds. This step requires use of a form; you can make a simple one by using a metal punch to make a few holes in a large empty tuna can. Fill the form with the curds while they are still warm. Place another (full) soup can on top. Put this arrangement inside a tall pot (for stability) and apply increasing weight (whatever you can safely stack on top of the cans) over time.