

HOW TO MAKE CHEDDAR CHEESE

Flavorful, creamy, and firm, cheddar can be used in a variety of ways: sliced for sandwiches, grated as a garnish for soups or salads, pared into curls to top a casserole, or just eaten in bite-size pieces with fruit or on its own.



Ingredients:

- 2 gallons cow or goat milk (rehydrated non instant powdered milk is what I use)
- 1/8 teaspoon calcium chloride diluted in 1/4 cup water (optional)
- 6 Tbsp buttermilk
- Rennet, dissolved in 1/2 cup cool water (choose one):
 - 1/2 teaspoon liquid animal rennet *or*
 - 1/4 tablet vegetable rennet
- 2 tablespoons sea salt

Equipment:

- Large pot
- Thermometer
- Long knife (curd knife; does not need to be sharp)
- Cheesecloth
- Cheese wax
- Cheese press

Instructions:

1. In a large pot, heat the milk to 85°F, stirring frequently.
2. As the milk is heating, add the calcium chloride, if using.
3. When the milk gets to 85°F, add buttermilk, stir in with an up-and-down motion, cover, and ferment for 1 hour.
4. Stir to homogenize the milk, and slowly fold in the diluted rennet. Using an up-and-down motion with your spoon will ensure that the rennet works its way through all the milk, so you can get the highest possible yield.
5. Allow the cheese to set for 1 hour, or until the whey begins to separate from the curd. You should see a layer of mostly clear whey floating on top of the curd, and the curd should be pulling away from the sides of the pot.
6. Using the knife, carefully cut the curds into 1/4-inch cubes and allow to set for 5 minutes. Do not stir.
7. Over the next 30 minutes, slowly heat the curds to 100°F, stirring frequently. As you stir, the curds will shrink.
8. Once the curds are at 100°F, maintain the temperature and continue stirring for the next 30 minutes. If the curds get too hot, remove from heat.
9. After 30 minutes, stop stirring and allow the curds to settle to the bottom of the pot. This will take about 20 minutes.
10. Pour the curds into a colander. Place the colander and curds back into the cheese pot and allow to drain for 15 minutes.

11. Remove the colander from the pot and turn the curds out onto a cutting board. You should have a semi-solid mass that looks like jelly. Pour the whey out of the pot, cut the mass into five slices, and place back into the pot. Cover.
12. Fill a sink or basin with 102°F water and place the pot and curds into it. Keeping the temperature of the curds right around 100°F, turn the slices every 15 minutes for the next 2 hours. This is the cheddaring process and will give your cheese its unique flavor and deliciousness.
13. After 2 hours, the curds will be shiny and very firm. Remove them from the pot and cut into ½-inch cubes. Place back in the pot, cover, and place in the sink filled with 102°F water.
14. In 10 minutes, stir gently with your fingers or a wooden spoon. Repeat twice more.
15. Remove the pot from the sink and add salt. Stir gently once more.
16. Line the cheese press with a piece of cheesecloth and carefully place the curds into the press. Wrap the cloth around the cheese and press at 10 pounds of pressure for 15 minutes.
17. Remove the cheese from the press, unwrap, and flip the cheese. Re-wrap using a fresh piece of cheesecloth, and press at 40 pounds of pressure for 12 hours.
18. Remove the cheese from the press, unwrap, and flip the cheese. Re-wrap using a fresh piece of cheesecloth, and press at 50 pounds of pressure for 24 hours.
19. Remove the cheese from the press and air-dry for 2 to 3 days, until smooth and dry to the touch.
20. Wax the cheese and age at 55° to 60°F for at least 60 days.