

FARM COTTAGE CHEESE MAKING

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A pierced tin cheese colander and mold from Pennsylvania.
Photo by Karas.

—Preparing the Milk—

The making of cottage cheese in small quantities for home use is not a complicated project but requires careful attention at certain points. The method is essentially the proper souring of milk, removal of the whey, and the treatment of the curd. One should use strictly fresh skim milk which has been produced and handled under the best sanitary conditions. In determining the amount of milk to use in making cottage cheese one may expect to obtain about one and one half pound of cottage cheese curd from a gallon of skim milk.

Pasteurization: The skim milk should first be pasteurized by heating to 142° to 145°F. and maintaining that temperature for 30 minutes. This may be done with a double boiler arrangement or home electric milk pasteurizer. It is essential that the temperature of the skim milk does not get above 145°F.

After the skim milk is pasteurized it should be cooled quickly to 70° - 75°F. if it is to be used immediately, or to 40°F. if it is not to be used immediately for cheese making.

—Equipment and Ingredients—

The equipment necessary for the making of cottage cheese includes a large double boiler or home electric pasteurizer, dairy thermometer, colander, large spoon, curd knife, large spatula, fresh commercial buttermilk or clabbered milk for starter, junket tablets, cream and salt.

—Making Cheese—

1. Sanitize all equipment with hot water or chlorinated cold water just before use.
2. Adjust the temperature of the pasteurized skim milk to 70° to 75°F.
3. Add ½ cup of cultured buttermilk or clabbered milk per gallon of skim milk. Stir the milk thoroughly so that the cultured buttermilk or clabber is well distributed. If clabber is used it should be obtained from the natural souring of the cleanest milk possible.

4. Dissolve ¼ junket tablet in two tablespoons of cold water and add one tablespoon of this solution to each gallon of skim milk used. Stir the milk thoroughly.

5. Cover the milk and let it stand undisturbed for 12 to 16 hours (overnight) at 70° - 75°F. It should coagulate into a firm curd.

6. Cut the firm curd into squares of about one inch with a large knife.

7. Allow the cut curd to stand undisturbed for 10 minutes. Then heat very slowly to 110° - 155°F. It should take about 30 minutes. A quart of warm water (100° - 110°F.) per gallon of skim milk may be added to help raise the temperature. Stir the curd gently every five minutes.

8. Drain the whey by pouring the curd into a clean colander. Handle carefully to prevent breaking the cubes. The whey should be drained from the curd within 15 to 20 minutes.

9. Wash the drained curd in two successive waters at about 50°F. and allow to drain.

10. After the curd has been drained and washed it may be salted and creamed to taste. About one to two teaspoons of salt per gallon of milk used or pound of cheese made and about ⅓ cup of fresh pasteurized cream per pound of cheese made is suggested.

—Storage—

Cottage Cheese spoils easily. The use of pasteurized skim milk and pasteurized cream in making it will reduce spoilage. It should be made often and consumed in a fresh state. Place cottage cheese in a clean closed container and keep cool until ready to consume or market.

References:

1. Cottage Cheese Recipes—Clemson Agri. Ext. Service Circular 426. 1957
2. How to Make and Use Cottage Cheese—N.C. Agri. Ext. Service Misc. Pamphlet No. 160. 1956