

Camembert

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Based on recipe from Dr. Lisbeth Goddik at Oregon State University.

Ingredients and Equipment

2 gallons of whole milk. Store bought pasteurized (but not ultra-pasteurized) milk can be used, but use the best milk you can buy. Quality raw milk is a better choice if you can obtain it.

1/4 teaspoon direct set mesophilic starter or 4 ounces of mother starter

1/16 teaspoon Penicillium Candidum

1/16 teaspoon Geotrichum Candidum

1/4 teaspoon 30% Calcium Chloride solution diluted in 1/4 cup of bottled or boiled and cooled water.

1/3 teaspoon Rennet (or amount recommended by manufacturer or by experience) diluted in 1/4 cup bottled or filtered water (don't dilute until you are ready to use it)

1/2 gallon saturated salt brine solution at 55F

A draining rack such as a cake cooling rack set in a half sheet pan, lifted to drain into a sink

Three 4 inch cheese molds, 8 sushi rolling mats, and 2 small cheese boards

Plastic aging containers lined with sushi mats cut to fit.

Optional: Camembert wrapping

Method

If using raw milk, optionally pasteurize it by heating it to 145F for 30 minutes. Cool to 91F before continuing.

Heat milk to 91F. Add mesophilic starter, P. Candidum, and G. Candidum.

Allow to ripen for 90 minutes.

Dilute Calcium Chloride, then add it and stir, then dilute and add rennet. Stir for 2 minutes, then top stir for 1 minute if using non-homogenized milk.

Allow to set until a clean break is achieved. About 1 hour.

Cut curds to 3/4 inch pieces.

Let curds heal for 10 minutes, then stir the curds gently. Stir again at 20 minutes after cutting.

Set up the cheese molds in a "mold sandwich": On top of a draining rack place a sterilized small cheese board, followed by a sterilized sushi mat, followed by the cheese mold, then another sushi mat. Repeat with as many molds as necessary to contain the curds. Have one extra cheese board to use when flipping each mold; the board at the bottom of the first flipped mold become the board for flipping the next.

At 30 minutes after cutting, transfer curds to the cheese molds.

Allow to drain for a total of 6 hours, flipping as follows:

1 hour after filling the mold, flip the mold over by placing a cheese board on the top mat, and then carefully lifting the bottom mat with your other hand, being very careful not to let the curds spill out. Flip over smoothly and quickly. Flip again the mold at 3 hours and 6 hours from filling the mold.

Leave the cheese in mold overnight at room temperature or warmer (84F is ideal)

Unmold and transfer cheese to a saturated brine solution. Brine for 1 hour.

Place cheese on a wire rack and allow to dry for 1 to 2 hours. Surface should be visibly dry before moving to the aging environment.

Place cheese in an aging environment of 52F and 90% humidity. A plastic food storage container with a sushi mat cut to fit works well. Leave the lid on, but don't crimp it down. Don't let liquid accumulate under the cheese; remove it as needed.

After 7 days, the cheese should have a light coat of white mold growing on it. Turn the cheese over at this point. Turn again once per day and continue to age for 7-13 more days. As the mold grows it will create the rind of the cheese.

At this point the cheese should ideally be wrapped in Camembert wrapping and moved to a cooler environment of either 45F or a standard refrigerator temperature. You can also continue to age at 55F without wrapping, but continue to flip every 2-4 days and watch carefully as it will age more quickly. The cheese will be ready after 5-7 weeks of total aging (i.e. since the brining step), and will become more runny the longer you age it.