

Monterey Jack Cheese

2 gallons skim milk
1 quart heavy cream
1 teaspoon calcium chloride
1/4 teaspoon **Mesophilic A**
1/4 teaspoon liquid rennet

Combine skim milk and heavy cream in your cheese pot. This will give you the consistency of raw milk. Pasteurize the mixture in a double boiler then cool it to 88 degrees F. Add 1/4 teaspoon of **Mesophilic A** starter. Stir in thoroughly. Allow the milk to ripen for 45 minutes.

In a glass dish combine 1 teaspoon of calcium chloride with 2 tablespoons of distilled water. Add this mixture to the milk and stir gently for 25 seconds.

Increase the temperature of the milk to 90 degrees F. Add 1/4 teaspoon of liquid rennet to 4 ounces of cool distilled water. Add this mixture to the 90 degrees F milk and stir gently.

Allow the milk to set at 90 degrees F for 30 to 60 minutes or until the milk has set into a firm curd with a clean break. Using a long bladed stainless steel knife cut the curd into 1/2 inch cubes. Let the curds set for 10 minutes.

Place the cheese pot into a second pot of 90 degrees F water. Indirectly heat the curds to 100 degrees F by increasing the temperature no faster than two degrees every five minutes. It should take 35-45 minutes to reach 100 degrees F. Stir the curds gently but frequently during this cooking period to keep the curd pieces from matting together.

Maintain the curds at 100 degrees F for an additional 30 minutes stirring every several minutes to keep the curd from matting. Then allow the curd to settle for five minutes.

Pour off the whey down to the level of the curd. Maintain a temperature of 100 degrees F by placing the pot of curd into a water bath which is at 100 degrees F. Allow the curds to set for 30 minutes stirring every five minutes to prevent matting.

Line a colander with cheesecloth and place it in a sink. Pour the curds and whey into the colander and allow to drain. Sprinkle one tablespoon of cheese salt over the curd and gently mix it into the curd.

Place the curds into the plastic cheese mold which is lined with cheesecloth. Pull up on the sides of the cloth to avoid any bunching of the cloth. After pouring all the curds into the mold, lay the excess length of cheesecloth evenly over the top of the curds. Place a suitable sized plate or saucer on top of the curd and set a one pound weight on top of the plate. A plastic 1 pint jar of water works well. Press the cheese for 15 minutes.

Remove the cheese from the press and take it out of the cheesecloth. Place the cheesecloth back in the mold and return the cheese to the mold upside down. Fold the excess cheesecloth over the cheese and again put the plate on top of the cheese. Now press the cheese with 4 pound pressure for 12 hours This can be done with 1/2 gallon plastic jug of water.

Air dry the cheese for 1-3 days. Wax the cheese and store for aging at 40 to 50 degrees F for at least three months. Turn the cheese over daily for the first month and several times a week thereafter.