

Asiago With Basil - adapted from recipes by Peter Dixon

Ingredients:

- 1 gallon Raw Whole milk
- 1/8 teaspoon EZAL TA61 + EZAL LH100 (Double for pasteurized milk)
- Double Strength rennet



Procedure:

Heat raw milk to 89-93 °F

Add starter culture (Add 1/10th the amount of starter if evening milk has been standing overnight) use:

EZAL TA61 + EZAL LH100

(Double the amounts of starter culture for pasteurized milk)

After 30-45 minutes add 9 ml single strength rennet to 100 lb. milk

Check for curdling point and multiply time by 2.5 to get time of waiting from adding rennet to cutting; usually is 20-25 minutes Cut curd into rice grain to corn kernel-sized particles; takes about 5-10 minutes

Heat steadily while stirring curds and whey to 104 °F in 20 minutes

Cook at this temp. for 15-20 minutes until curds are no longer sticking

Heat to 116-118 °F in 20 minutes Cook at this temp. until curd is firm enough. Curds should be very springy and easy to rub apart in the palms of your hand.

Allow curds to settle to bottom for 20-30 minutes

Gather all curds in a cake and drag a coarse cheese cloth underneath to bind them Lift curd cake out of vat in the cloth and let the whey drain off for a few minutes

Divide curd cake into pieces to fit the press forms

Press about one hour until the wheels are formed

Take off press, remove cloths, turn wheels, replace with smooth cloths dipped in brine, and press again

Turn wheels 1-2 more times during pressing if possible

Leave on press overnight; keep the room at 72-76 °F

Next morning remove wheels from press and move to the brine room at 50-55°F.

After 24 hours brine the wheels for 4-5 hours per lb.

Turn the wheels in the brine once per day and sprinkle dry salt on the tops