

Montasio - adapted from recipes by Peter Dickson

Ingredients:

7 gallons Raw Milk
1/2 teaspoon Ezal TA 61
1/2 teaspoon Ezal LH100
10 drops Amatto
Calcium Chloride
Lipase powder
Rennet



Procedure:

Whole raw milk at 87-95° F.

Add cultures allow to ripen for 1 hour

For pasteurized milk use twice as much starter culture

Use higher temperatures for cooler ambient temperatures and lower solids milk.

Use lower temperatures for warmer ambient temperatures and higher solids milk.

Add Amatto

Add calcium chloride dissolved in 1/4 cup pure water.

Add lipase powder, up to 4 grams (1 tsp.) if desired

After 30 minutes add 9 ml single strength rennet.

Check for flocculation and let coagulation go for 3 times the flocculation from adding rennet to cutting, e.g. 3 x 12 min. = 36 min.

Cut the curd into corn kernel sized particles. Heal for 5 minutes.

Stir and cook curds slowly and steadily to 118-122° F in 45-60 min. Raise temperature 5° F in the first 15 minutes and increase cooking rate and stirring speed afterwards.

Settle curds under whey. Gather curds in a large cake under the whey and drain off the whey. After draining, the curd is broken up with a "thornbush" (special tool, use your imagination) and then stirred for 15-35 min. to release the whey. At the end of this period the curd is wrinkled and shrunken looking. The curd is then put into the forms lined with cheesecloth and pressed overnight.

Dry salt or brine the cheeses. Dry salt with coarse flake salt once a day for every 2 lb. of cheese (10-12 days). Brine for 4 hours per pound.

Age at 59-63° F and 80% RH for 6-12 months. Scrub the rinds during aging with brine to keep them smooth.

During aging, the cheese changes from having a smooth supple rind and firm paste with a few scattered eyes to having a hard, dry brown rind and granular paste with tiny holes.