

Techniques and Tips for Adding Ingredients in Cheese making



Home cheese making requires learning a few new techniques in the kitchen, even if you are an experienced cook. Some ingredients called for in cheese recipes should be added to the milk using specific methods and at specific points in the process. Learn the simple techniques for adding common cheese making ingredients and get started making delicious cheeses at home!

How to Add Cheese Cultures to Milk

Powdered direct-set cultures

- Sprinkle cheese cultures over the surface of the milk.
- Cover and let the cultures rehydrate on the surface of the milk for around 5 minutes.
- Use a perforated spoon or a large whisk to stir them in gently until fully incorporated, 1 to 2 minutes, or as long as the recipe specifies.
- Once cultures are mixed in, cover the pot and leave undisturbed for ripening. Any agitation during this period slows down acidification, which may damage the cheese.

Prepared starters

Add prepared starters using the same method as for dry starter cultures, excluding the rehydration step.

How to Add Rennet and Other Coagulants to Milk

Add rennet to milk after the ripening phase. After renneting, the milk is left to set: curds coagulate and separate from the whey.

Rennet is always diluted in unchlorinated water. Undiluted rennet will not distribute properly in the milk and may affect curd-setting and/or produce a bad curd. Rennet is diluted in 20-50 times its own volume of cool, unchlorinated water, or as directed in the recipe.

Rennet, or any coagulant, must be measured carefully.

- Too much rennet will cause the curd to be too firm and rubberlike
- Too little rennet may cause the milk to not separate properly.

To add rennet to milk, follow the steps below:

- Pour the diluted mixture through a perforated spoon into the milk to help distribute it evenly.
- Use the spoon to begin stirring the milk slowly in an up-and-down motion. Make sure to stir right down to the bottom of the pot. Stir in this way for about a minute, to disperse rennet evenly, or as directed by the recipe.

- Cover the pot and leave undisturbed for the rest of the coagulation period, to avoid damaging the developing curd and causing loss of butterfat.

How to Add Common Cheesemaking Ingredients to Milk

Cheese colouring

Add cheese colouring to milk before the ripening period and before the rennet, because it can damage the coagulation properties of the rennet if added later. Dilute with unchlorinated water only.

- Add colouring by pouring the diluted colouring agent through a perforated spoon into the milk.
- Stir in completely for a minimum of 30 seconds.

If a recipe does not specify the dilution ratio, use 1 part coloring to 20 parts water. Milk will not take on a deep color immediately, because of the high water content within the milk, but as curds are drained and pressed, the color should develop nicely.