

Camembert!

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Necessary Materials:

- o o 2 Gallon Stainless Steel Pot
- o Cooking Thermometer
- o 4 Camembert Cheese Moulds
- o Cheese Cloth
- o Large Slotted Spoon
- o Plastic or Stainless Steel Storage Box
- o Large Cutting Knife
- o Ripening Mat
- o MA4001/4002 or Meso II or MM100 Culture
- o Penicillium candidum
- o Rennet

Pasteurization:

Well, you have many choices when it comes to pasteurization (pasteurizing, ultra-pasteurizing, heat treating, and ultra-heat treating) or even choosing not to pasteurize whatsoever. Since Camembert is an aged cheese, meaning it is ripened in a controlled environment for 60+ days, I recommend working with raw products or pasteurizing at the lowest temperature. If choosing raw milk, best to know where your milk comes from!

- o Pasteurization: Bring milk slowly to 145°F and maintain temperature for ½ hour
or 161°F for 15 seconds
- o Ultra-Pasteurization: Bring milk slowly to 191°F for at least 1 second
- o Heat Treating: Bring milk slowly to 161°F for 15 seconds
- o Ultra-Heat Treating: Aka “long-life” milk; flash heat milk at 275-300°F

Time to make cheese:

(Recipe courtesy of Margaret P. Morris', The Cheesemaker's Manual, pp 135-7)

- 1) Warm *slowly* or *rapidly* cool milk to start temperature of 84°F (29°C).
- 2) Add Culture: 30 ml (1oz) Meso II prepared mother culture
or ¼ tsp. of Meso II powder
or 1/8 tsp. of MA 4001/4002
or 1/8 tsp. of MM100 (*the culture I am currently using*)
- 3) Add 1/8 tsp. of Penicillium candidum powder

4) Allow the culture to dissolve on the milk surface for 4 minutes before stirring. Mix

into the milk using 20 top/bottom strokes

5) Add ¼ tsp rennet diluted in ¼ cup of cool water. Mix well into the milk. Allow it to

ripen and rennet until curds form in 1 to 1 ½ hours. Maintain start temperature by placing the milk in a warm water bath, or do as I do and leave the pot on the stove

with a lid and a draped towel. Make sure the stove is off, though.

6) Test curd for a clean break and proceed to cut it into ½ inch cubes. Stir gently for 2-3 minutes, treating the curds like the dainty bits they truly are at all times.

7) After cutting the curds, allow them to settle for 5-10 minutes without stirring. Then pour out as much whey as possible prior to ladling the curds into the Camembert moulds. The moulds will drain rapidly, so you will have to refill in order to obtain the desired thickness of the final product. Place the moulds on ripening mats that sit at the bottom of your storage box. Keep the lid completely closed during draining to protect the cheese from air born particles and to assist in maintaining constant temperature and humidity.

OR

7) You can partially pre-drain the curds in cheesecloth for 20 minutes, then ladle from the bags into the moulds. I have experimented with this method a couple times, and I find it strengthens the curds and allows you to step away from the process for a few minutes if you find yourself busy on a cheesemaking day.

8) Allow the cheese to drain at room temperature overnight, but flip the cheeses in the moulds after 3-4 hours of draining. The cheese will drain to half the size. ****Crucial**** Remove the drained whey from the storage box to allow for further draining of the cheeses as well as preventing black mold!

9) Once the cheeses have completely drained (around 12-14 hours) they should be removed from the moulds. Place the cheeses on a clean ripening mat in the storage box and sprinkle ½ tsp. of coarse salt on each side (top & bottom). Place the lid back on the box slightly open to allow for a little air circulation until no further moisture accumulates under the cheese (around 3-5 days depending on the weather). At this point, the lid can be tightened into position.

10) Transfer your cheese in their box to a ripening room (or refrigerator) at 50-54°F (10-12°C). (The fridge may be a temperature of 40-45°F, so the process may take slightly longer.) The white mold should begin to appear within 5-7 days.

Once you have achieved this glorious white mold, you must turn your cheeses daily (with the cleanest of hands) in order to have even crust growth. When the cheese is completely bloomed with the *P. candidum* mold, you can wrap the cheese in cheese wrap or cello paper, or you can leave them in the refrigerator to continue ripening. The cheese will be ready to eat when the center of it feels soft under thumb pressure, which takes about 6-8 weeks at fridge temp or a little bit less in a warmer ripening room.

Helpful tip:

Remove the excessive moisture that may accumulate on the storage box during ripening. This moisture will encourage bad black mold (aka “cat hair” mold) growth!

Go wild! Experiment with different milk, different amounts of salt, tweak the recipe here and there until you find what works with your environment! Always enjoy this frenzied fermentation and protein preservation!