

QUESO REXO

passed along to the Maine Cheese Guild by Rex Infanger, Cheese Professional

Makes about 1 pound cheese in about 55 minutes.

1 gallon milk (whole or skim or anything in between)

1 quart cultured buttermilk (mesophilic) OR active yogurt (thermophilic)

0.5 ml double-strength (1.0 ml single strength) rennet

2.5% salt by weight of the milled curd (approx. around 1 or 2 Tablespoons)

Mix and heat dairy to 95 degrees F in a sterilized pot, ideally a double-boiler set-up (two stock pots, one set inside the other, work quite well, allowing you to measure the water temp OUTSIDE the milk instead of directly in the milk).

Add rennet. When set *firm* (which shouldn't take more than 3 to 5 minutes) immediately cut into 1/2 inch cubes

Let curds "heal" for 5 minutes as you gently raise temp to 116 deg F.

After 5 minutes begin to stir curds, VERY gently at first, cutting outside curds down to appropriate size. Continue to stir after temp reaches 116degF for 15 minutes.

Drain curds into cheesecloth and press with 5 pound weight (while keeping the curds warm) for 15 minutes.

Mill curds into small pieces, weigh them, measure out the 2.5% salt (typically around 0.5 oz or 15 grams), mix, then pack back into the cheesecloth and press with 5 pounds of pressure again for at least 15 minutes before slicing to taste. If you have the time, allow to remain pressing for a few hours before un-molding.

The cheese is ready to eat immediately.