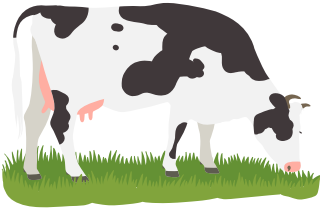


How a block of cheddar cheese is made



It all starts with fresh milk from cows.

The standard cheese making process requires the correct milk composition (such as protein and fat) to make the desired cheese. The amounts depend on the type of cheese that is being made.

1. Pasteurisation

First, the milk is **pasteurised** to remove harmful bacteria. This also extends the shelf life.

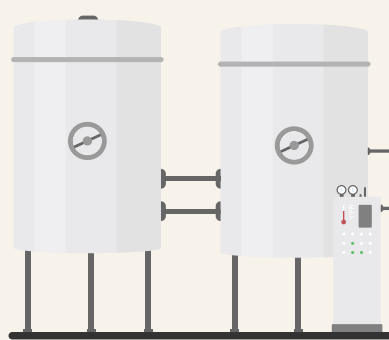


2. Fermentation

After pasteurisation, the milk is transferred into a cheese vat at the optimal temperature for **starter cultures** to grow. Cultures are now added which is a crucial ingredient of cheese!

Cultures are the key to consistent cheese making and flavour development. Starter cultures contain bacteria that ferment lactose into lactic acid. There are thousands of different culture

strains which can all make cheeses with different flavour profiles and textures.



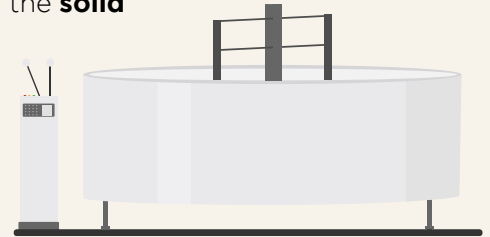
3. Adding rennet



Next **rennet** is added, coagulating the milk into a soft curd. Rennet can either be vegetarian or from animal origin.

4. Separating curds and whey

Once the curd is firm enough, it is cut into smaller pieces to separate the **liquid whey** from the **solid milk curd**. The curd and whey mix is then gently cooked and left to expel more whey. For some cheeses the curd can also be washed with warm water and the excess whey drained off.



5. Adding salt

Salt is an important ingredient in cheese as it adds flavours, aids in ripening and works as a natural preservative.

The curd is dry salted in a process called **cheddaring**.

The salted curd is then transported to a tower called a block former. Here the weight of the curd squeezes out more whey and compacts all the individual curd fingers together to form a cheddar cheese block!



6. Maturing and ageing

The cheddar cheese blocks are **stored** in temperature controlled rooms, left to mature to allow flavours and body to develop.

The cheese makers take great care to ensure the cheese matures, developing the desired final flavour and texture. Generally the more the cheddar cheese is matured, the stronger tasting and crumblier it will be.

