

LES FROMAGES DE FRANCE

Preliminaires:

“A country producing 360 different types of cheeses cannot die!” Winston Churchill, 1940

“How can you govern a country which has 246 varieties of cheeses!” General de Gaulle, 1962

“A meal without cheese is like a beautiful women with an eye missing!” Brillat Savarin, 1755-1826.

History does not tell us when, where or by whom the first batches of cheese was made, but it tells of its uses by early civilizations , the Egyptians, the Curds, the Greeks and Romans the Jews and the nomadic tribes of Asia and Africa.

Some of the finest and tastier cheeses of France are not available here because they are made of raw milk and aged less then 60 days. USFDA does not permit their sale because of risk of bacterial diseases.

Cheese is made from the curd of whole, partly skimmed or skimmed milk with or without addition of cream.

Cheese is the casein of milk with varying amounts of butterfat and whey.

Factors affecting the differences in cheeses are:

- **source of milk: cow, goat , sheep, yak...**
- **butterfat contend: whole, partly skimmed, skimmed.**
- **the agent used to coagulate the milk: acid or rennet.**
- **the amount of whey removed from the Curd.**
- **the treatment and final curing process.**

The making of Cheese:

The first step in making cheese is to coagulate the milk in order to separate the curd from the whey.

It is done by: - letting milk sour naturally.

- **by adding lactic-acid starter.**
- **by adding rennet, an enzyme found in the fourth stomach of the calf.**

It is from rennet-coagulated curd that most commercial cheeses are made.

The curd is separated from most of the whey by means of a press. The degree of separation is determined by the type of cheese desired, soft, semi-soft or hard.

The curd is seasoned and pressed in to shapes characteristic of the particular cheese being produced.

- for Roquefort, bleu d'Auvergne and any blue cheese, the curd is inoculated with pure culture of blue mold that penetrates during the curing process.**
- Comte , or Emmenthal owe their flavor and holes to the addition of an organism that produces gases during the early stages of the ripening process while the cheese is still soft and elastic.**

Cheese is allowed to ripen or cure in natural caves or storerooms with controls that regulate temperature and humidity.

The time of aging depends on the type of cheese desired.

The longer the aging, the sharper the cheese.

Unripened cheese requires no aging.