

Cheesemaking and Fermentation

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Supplies

In this course you will need the following supplies:



CaCl (Calcium chloride). A liquid calcium that, although not 100% needed will result in better curd formation and better product outcome for students. This is cheap and lasts a long time. Students need just a ¼ teaspoon for many recipes. It works by letting calcium ‘build more bridges’ between the casein (protein) micelles that, when glomped together, become curds. Consider doing side-by-side comparisons asking half the class to make cheese without CaCl while the other half uses it. Compare results. This is hands on chemistry. You CaCl is always diluted in distilled water before use.

A one ounce bottle will last an entire class for the whole course.

Weak acids. For making soft cheeses you will need the following weak acids: **Lemon juice** (Lemon cheese, & paneer), **citric acid** (ricotta & paneer), **vinegar 5%** (queso blanco). Purchase quart bottles of lemon juice & vinegar. Citric acid comes in a small 1 oz. bottle or better yet (and less expensive) is to buy it from Fleet Farm or the Grocery store in the home canning aisle as a 7.5 ounce jar of powder. Make sure the vinegar you get is 5% and not 3 or 4% or you will not get good curd. You can use lemons instead of lemon juice if you want students to experiment a little, but squeezed lemons vary in strength and you may have to add more than the recipe calls for to get good curd. Not a problem except your cheese will be somewhat lemony flavored.



Salt. In this course the salt always must be free of iodine. Just as in home canning, iodine can leave a black residue in your product. Additionally, iodine kills bacteria, right? So we don’t want that anywhere near our wonderful bacterial cheese cultures. You can use the salt available in the pickling section of the home canning aisles of grocery stores. Sometimes this salt is coarse and not fine though. The best cheesemakers weigh their salt rather than measuring volume because salt density can vary with the fineness of grind. Purchase about a pound of cheese salt to make the recipes for a 20 person class and it will last you for the entire course.



This product was developed by the Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) program with funding from the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture (NIFA-USDA). Any opinions, findings, conclusions or recommendations expressed within do not necessarily reflect the view of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. U.S. Department of Agriculture is an equal opportunity provider and employer.