

Real Cheese Home Made

QUITE a spirited reaction resulted from my reply to a letter from Mrs. B.M.S. asking how to make real cheese at home. I said I thought this would be almost impossible, and that cottage cheese was the usual home-made variety, which is simply curdled milk well drained and pressed (so that the whey is all taken out), and then salted to taste and used as a spread. This is very popular, too, because it uses up all sour milk, which can still be found in districts where bottled, pasteurised milk is not in universal use; and it is healthy and nourishing because it retains so much of the calcium and protein of milk. But real cheese—that is another matter altogether.

Cheese is a traditional food—dates from 1400 B.C.—and all the Old World countries have made their own varieties over the centuries, using milk from sheep, cows, goats, reindeer, camels, or mares, whichever happened to be the mother animal. They all knew that milk was one of their chief necessities, and therefore they made it into cheese because they could thus keep it and transport it.

Many countries and districts are known by their special cheeses: Swiss

cheeses, little round ones, as well as the famous Gruyere; Italian cheeses, including the hard Parmesan; the French Camembert; English Cheddar (Somerset), as well as Yorkshire, Cheshire and Leicester; for the acquired taste, one called Gorgonzola, and the Danish blue. It's almost an infinite variety. I understand that Switzerland has a "Cheese University," where you may qualify for a diploma. As the goodness of cheese is related, by custom, largely to its age, it seems we cannot make at home such a perfect product. But here are some letters which have been sent in by very well-informed and interested readers of our Page, which will stimulate many of you into trying your hand; and please do write to me about your results.

(1) Latvian Cheese

"In connection with Mrs. B.M.S.'s letter, I take the liberty of telling you that home-made cheese is very popular in Latvia, which is my native country. For making home cheese, curd is necessary. It may be obtained from full or skim milk, mostly from skim. Fill up 2-3rd to ¾ of a bucket with fresh milk, let it stay in a pretty warm room (65 degrees to 70 degrees) till it curdles



and forms an even clot. (It may take one to two days.) Stir the mass. Put the bucket into a vessel with warm water (120 degrees to 130 degrees) and heat slowly. When the contents of the bucket have become warm, add some fresh milk (one-fourth to one-third part of the quantity of the sour milk), stirring slowly and heating until all the curd has risen to the surface. If the curd is supposed to be used as a spread, the heating temperature must be lower—the curd will be soft. If the curd is wanted for making cheese, the temperature must be higher, the curd will be crisper. Put the mass into a thin cloth, let the whey run off. Put on some weight and leave till all liquid is gone. Well-made curd (cottage cheese) is soft and sweet; it may be used as a spread along with butter after some cream and salt is added.

"**Making Cheese:** Heat water and full milk in a kettle till boiling temperature, add well broken up curd, and heat until whey separates. The curd may be more or less solid clot, so before being put into the hot water and milk, it must be broken up or minced completely, so that there are not any bigger pieces left. Instead of being broken up by hand, it may be put through a mincer—it will be even more uniform. If the whey does not separate it means that curd was too sweet. In such case, some whey which was obtained when curd was made should be added. Put the mass into a bag or a piece of thin cloth, shake till the whey has flown down, tie up, place

on a tray, put on some weight and keep until it becomes quite cool. Untie the cloth, spread both sides of the cheese with salt and leave it in the same cloth till the salt has penetrated. Well-made cheese will be soft and yellow.

"Eggs may be added in three ways: (1) They may be kneaded into the curd. (2) They may be put into the kettle when the milk is near the boiling point, before the curd is put in. (3) They may be mixed into the mass after it has been taken out of the kettle and the whey has been drained off. I prefer the second method, for in this case cheese has a peculiar pattern. Some butter, salt and caraway seeds (if wanted) are mixed in after the whey has been drained.

"**Proportions:** Curd 3lb., full milk 5 quarts, water 1 pint, eggs 4, butter 2 to 3 oz., salt, caraway seeds as desired. Some housewives would butter the cheese after some days and bake it in oven, then it acquires nice brown crust. If it is necessary to keep the cheese longer, more eggs and butter must be added."—Mrs. H.G., Auckland.

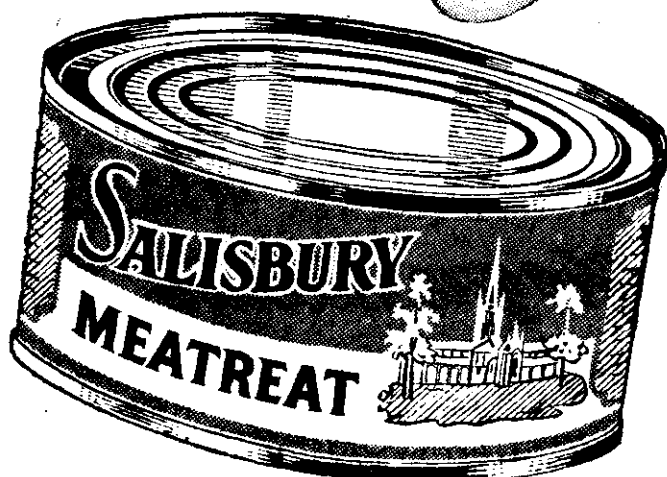
(2) Northland Cheese

From R.F., Northland:

"I remember my father telling of making real cheese at home in the early days, and of it keeping for a long time. As he later worked in a cheese factory he probably knew what he was talking about and didn't confuse it with cottage or cream cheese. I was given an English recipe some time ago, but so far have

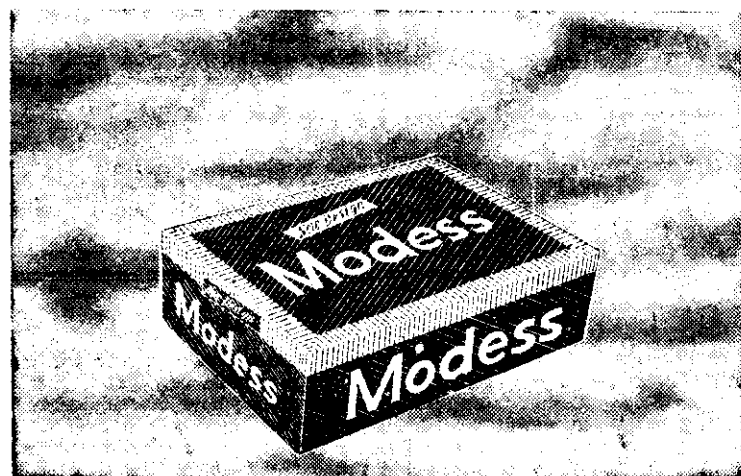
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