



DAIRY SHEEP



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BACKGROUND

- People have been milking sheep for thousands of years.
- Sheep were being used for milk long before cows were.
- The dairy sheep industry is concentrated mostly in European countries that are on or near the Mediterranean Sea.
- The dairy sheep industry is very small in the USA.
- Sheep milk is usually made into gourmet cheeses.

WHY CHOOSE DAIRY SHEEP PRODUCTS?

- Sheep milk is highly nutritious, richer in calcium, phosphorus, potassium, magnesium, and vitamins A, B, and E than cow's milk.
- Sheep milk contains a higher proportion of short- and medium-chain fatty acids, which have widely recognized health benefits, making the milk a lot easier to digest.
 - Short- and medium-chain fatty acids are absorbed directly into the blood via intestine capillaries and travel through the portal vein just as other absorbed nutrients do.
 - Long-chain fatty acids are not directly released into the intestinal capillaries. Instead they are absorbed into the fatty walls of the intestine villi and reassembled again into triglycerides. The triglycerides are coated with cholesterol and protein (protein coat) into a compound called a chylomicron.
- Sheep milk contains a higher solids content than goat or cow milk, making it better for cheese-making.
- Sheep milk can be stored and frozen for long periods of time with no ill effect on the milk.

DAIRY SHEEP MANAGEMENT

- The lambs are usually separated from the ewes after 30-60 days.
- After this, the ewes are usually milked twice a day.
- The ewes are fed a diet to keep up with their milk production, as if they are still caring for a lamb.
- The udders are thoroughly cleaned before and after each milking.

TYPES OF SHEEP CHEESE

- Feta
- Ricotta
- Pecorino Romano
- Roquefort



Sheep 101

DAIRY BREEDS

- Assaf
- Awassi (one of the main breeds)
- Belgium Milk Sheep
- Bergamasca (multi-purpose!)
- British Milk Sheep
- Chios
- Churra
- Comisana
- East Freisian (one of the main breeds)
- Lacuane (most popular in France)
- Manchega (dual)
- Polish Mountain Sheep
- Sardinian



Sheep 101

WHAT DO YOU NEED TO MAKE CHEESE?

- Fresh Milk
- Rennet
- Starter culture
- Pot
- Whisk
- Knife
- Brine Solution



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HOW TO MAKE IT

1. Warm the milk to around 90 degrees F, add the starter culture and allow it to “set up” for about 15 minutes.
2. Dissolve the rennet in the milk, and whisk. Continue whisking for several minutes.
3. Allow the milk to “set up” again for about an hour.
4. Collect the curds, the small chunks that have formed, and cut them into small chunks with the knife.
5. Bring the temperature of the milk to near 115 degrees. Stir gently but constantly while you keep the milk and cut-up curds at this temperature for about 45 minutes.
6. Drain the curds and whey through a cheesecloth. Using the cheesecloth to contain the curds, press them repeatedly to remove as much moisture as possible. Rewrap the curds in a new cloth and press again. Repeat several times.
7. Soak the curds in a mild brine overnight, flipping occasionally to ensure both sides are treated.
8. Age the cheese in a cave (if you have one) or a fridge for several months. Flip the cheese daily and then weekly after about a month to ensure even drying!

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WAIT. WHAT'S A CHEESE CAVE...

- A place where you can store your cheese and let it age



AND VOILA! CHEESE!



TA-DA!!!

SOURCES

- Sheep 101 <<http://www.sheep101.info/>>
- Sheep 201 <<http://www.sheep101.info/201/index.html/>>
- Fankhauser, David B. "CHEESE MAKING ILLUSTRATED." *Cheese Making Illustrated*. University of Cincinnati Clermont College. Web. 02 Apr. 2012. <http://biology.clc.uc.edu/fankhauser/cheese/cheese_5_gallons/cheese_5gal_00.htm>.

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- Google Images