



Dairy Foods Consulting Westminster Artisan Cheesemaking

Peter Dixon, MS
Artisan Cheesemaker

Bulgarian Feta

for 100 lb. milk

While working with cheesemakers in Macedonia, I learned to make this cheese which they called *Belo Sirenje*. This recipe produces a softer cheese than its Greek counterpart. The highest quality Bulgarian Feta was made from sheep milk during the summer grazing months.

Heat milk to 93-94 °F.

Add starter using:

2.5 DCU CHOOZIT MT1 for 100 lb. milk

or

0.25 lb. bulk starter mesophilic aromatic such as Aroma B + 0.25 lb. thermophilic bulk starter such as ABIASA Thermo B

for aged Feta from raw milk

For fresh Feta from pasteurized milk double these amounts.

After 30 minutes add 9-ml single-strength rennet per 100 lb. milk.

Check for flocculation, which is the first sign of milk gelling into curd (should be 12-15 minutes), and multiply this by 6 to get the time from adding rennet to cutting. This is usually 70-90 minutes.

Cut the curd vertically into 3 inch squares with a single blade vertical knife. Don't cut horizontally. Let rest 10 minutes.

Ladle curds into cloth-lined rectangular forms with a pitcher or scoop by taking 1/2 inch horizontal slices.

Ladle one layer into 1st form, then 2nd, and so on, until all have one layer. Repeat adding more layers until forms are full of curds.

Collect enough of the whey from cheesemaking to use for making the 8-10% brine for aging the cheese in.

Fold over cloths and put on followers.

Press with 1/2 lb. weight to 1 lb. curds for two hours.

Take off weights, open cloths and cut curds vertically into one inch squares.

One person takes two corners of the cloth and the other person the other two corners. Lift the cloth holding the curds out of the form and gently roll them to and fro to release whey.

This is enough for sheep milk but repeat this procedure in one hour for goat and cow milk.

Return curds to forms and press again with one lb. weight to one lb. curd. Press for one hour more.

After this the curd should have pH 5.40 - 5.50 .

Leave the curd in the forms until this pH is reached and then cut curd into 4 inch x 4 inch square blocks and put into saturated (23%) brine for 4 hours per lb. cheese.

Take out blocks and put into pails for aging. Put in one layer of cheese blocks and apply salt liberally over the tops. Put in the next layer and repeat until the pail is full. Wait 24 hours. Some whey will have come out. Leave this in the pail and add 8% brine made from the cheesemaking whey and salt to

Peter Dixon, Dairy Foods Consulting

802.275.2297

peterhicksdixon@gmail.com



Dairy Foods Consulting **Westminster Artisan Cheesemaking**

Peter Dixon, MS
Artisan Cheesemaker

fill up the pail. It is important to eliminate as much air as possible from the headspace to prevent the growth of yeast and molds. The blocks of cheese can be kept under the whey by using a water-filled bag or a rigid mesh with a spacer between the top of the cheese blocks and the underside of the lid. If the container swells from gas production, puncture the top or remove the bung to release gas and reseal. This may happen often during aging.

The cheese is traditionally aged for at least 3 months.
The cheese can be aged at 45 to 55 °F for more than one year if cared for properly.

The finished cheese should have pH 4.50.