



Dairy Foods Consulting

Westminster Artisan Cheesemaking

Peter Dixon, MS
Artisan Cheesemaker

Monterey Jack

In the 19th century this cheese was made by Portuguese dairy farmers in the California's Central Coast, which was a very good dairying region. An entrepreneur named William Jacks began distributing this cheese, which he called Monterey Jack, to San Francisco and thereby developed its reputation and popularity.

For 100 lb. (12 gallons) pasteurized or raw milk.

Heat milk to 88-90° F

Add starter using:

5 DCU of CHOOZIT MA014, MA016, MA011, or MA019 or

2.5 U of CHOOZIT MA4001 or MA4002

or

8 oz. of bulk mesophilic lactic starter culture (ABIASA Meso III)

Ripen with culture for 1.5 hours for CHOOZIT culture and 1 hour for bulk culture

Add 9 ml single strength rennet for 100 lb. milk

Check for flocculation, which is the first sign of milk gelling into curd (should be 12-15 minutes), and multiply this times 3 to get the time from adding rennet to cutting the curd, e.g. 12 min. x 3 = 36 min. Cut into 3/8" cubes (pea-sized particles). Whey pH 6.50-6.55 at cutting

Settle curds after cutting for 2-3 minutes

Stir and heat curds to 95° F in 30 minutes (1°F every 4 minutes)

Continue stirring and heating to 100-102 °F in 15 minutes (1 °F every 3 minutes)

Cook at 102° F for 45-60 minutes until the curds bounce off your hand and feel like pellets and are springy when squeezed.

Whey pH 6.10-6.20 at end of cooking.

Settle curds under the whey for 15 minutes.

Move curds slowly to the back of the vat to form a pack that is 8 inches deep.

Drain off the whey until one inch remains above the curds. Begin stirring until the curds are separated and moving through the whey.

Add cold water and stir the curds in the whey until the temperature decreases to 86° F. Stir an additional 5 minutes

Drain off the remaining whey and form a trench in the middle of the pack to let the whey escape from the curds. When you are finished draining, there should be two packs of curds on either side of the back of the vat with an 8-10 inch wide trench down the middle. The pack should be about 4 inches deep.

Whey pH 5.90-6.00 by the time the pack is formed and most of the whey is drained.

Add salt when the majority of the whey has run off the curds. Use coarse flake salt (like Kosher salt) at a rate of 2.75 lb. per every 100 lb. curd. Break up the curds and mix in the salt by hand.

If making more than 100 lb. curd add the salt in 3 portions and wait 5-10 minutes between each addition.

The idea is to let enough salt dissolve into the curds before hooping the curds and pressing them into blocks or wheels. However for smaller batches, two applications will be enough for 50-100 lb. curd and one application for less than 50 lb. curd. Wait 10 minutes after the last of the salt is mixed into the curds.

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Gather the curds into the forms (blocks or hoops) lined with cheese cloth and move to the press.

Press with enough pressure to create a smooth rind by the next morning. This is 25 p.s.i. to start (about 200 lb. on a lever press). After 30 minutes take of the pressure and tighten the cheese cloths around the cheese. Press again at the same rate overnight.

Remove from the press and take the cheese out of the forms. The cheeses can be vacuum sealed or waxed. If muslin cheese cloth is used, it can be left on the rind and waxed over. Cheese ph 5.10-5.20 after pressing.

Monterey Jack is a mild cheese and is usually made from pasteurized milk and sold within 30 days of making. It will keep for about 90 days. The cheese can also be made from raw milk and aged as a cloth-bound or naturally rinded cheese. Dry Jack is made by aging the cheese and rubbing it periodically with oil and pigments such as cocoa powder. Dry Jack can be aged for years.