

CHEESE-A-HOLIC Issue 4 Page 1



CHEESELINKS

The ultimate newsletter for cheese enthusiasts, cheesemakers and cheese-a-holics everywhere!

CHEESE-A-HOLIC

12th January 2009

From the Editors

Happy New Year! We hope that you've had wonderful cheesemaking over the Christmas and New Year period and you've been sampling some delicious cheeses as well as your plum pudding, mince pies and roast turkey!

Cheese-a-holic will now be published roughly every two months instead of monthly. We're sorry for all those who are hanging out for each edition (last time we were a couple of days late and we got a bunch of emails asking where it was!) But it does take quite a bit of time to put together and in order to reduce our workplace stress it is really only manageable on a

bimonthly basis. We hope you understand!

We are really excited about a few different events for 2009. Firstly, Cheeselinks are holding our first ever sale. We have started clearing out our warehouse. Certain items that we imported years ago for commercial cheesemakers have been selling slowly, so we have put them on our home cheesemaking supplies list and are selling them off at cost price or below. Details can be found on the article on page three.

We are also overjoyed to be able to announce that Carole is heading back to Queensland to conduct workshops there this year — she will be at Towri Sheep Cheesery May 2nd and 3rd, and Witches Chase Cheese June 6 and 7.

The workshops at Towri Sheep Cheesery will be Cheeselinks first ever sheep's milk workshop, in which participants will make Halloumi, Fetta and Ricotta. The highlight, however, will be making authentic Greek Style Yoghurt, traditionally made from sheep's milk. Sheep's milk, with its higher fat and protein levels makes scrumptious thick creamy yoghurt! Bookings can be made on 07 55431403.

Another new workshop adventure will be the Purely Goat Workshop in Wingham, a couple of hours north of Newcastle on March 8th. With nothing but goat's milk used, we will be making real goat's milk feta and a soft goat curd for participants to take home. For bookings call 02 65534057.

Carole is also going to be the guest judge at the Bemboka Show on the 15th March 2009, which for the first time in years will be hosting a cheese section, in which cheese companies from the region will have their best cheeses for tasting and judging. And the exciting news for home cheese and yoghurt makers is that there will be a Non-Commercial section, so that all those who lovingly make cheese and yoghurt as a hobby can enter. There is still plenty of time, especially if your specialty is Fetta, Blue or Camembert, but you'll have to start your cheesemaking soon! It is really valuable to have comments on your home made products

- you don't have to be entering to win, just being able to have an expert critique your cheese is really worthwhile. Contact the Bemboka Secret Cheese Society on the following email address: stroudover@bigpond.com

Finally, we have filled up all the Little River workshops until June and as we have no more weekends available we are opening up some new dates on Fridays—Camembert will be on February 27th and Mozzarella on March 27th. Book in and come along to learn new skills or brush up your old ones—we guarantee they are worth taking a day off work for!

— Tracy and Carole Willman

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The Cheeselinks staff for 2009 —our team of wonderful women—(from left): Rachel, Julitha, Carole, Janet, (our newest staff member Rachael you can see in the reflection behind taking the photo!) Julie, Tracy, Tiffany and Lynne



Featured Cheese: Holy Goat 'La Luna'

The La Luna is definite a Cheeselinks family favourite—it gets devoured immediately whenever it appears on our table. We recently had some cheesemakers visiting us from Italy, and they fell in love with the 'La Luna' as well, determined to create something similar at their alpine Cheesery. La Luna is a white mould cheese, but it has a delightful, complex flavour due to the variety of white mould

used, coupled with the flavour of good quality goat's milk. With a wrinkled yeast rind, commonly known as 'toad skin' it is an unusual texture, a nutty aroma, and a fresh, creamy consistency. It softens as it ages but is eaten relatively young compared to other white mould cheeses. It comes in several varieties, including different shapes and sizes and wrapped in chestnut leaf.



Changes to the dairy food safety laws mean that dairy farmers are no longer allowed to sell milk for human consumption to anyone that does not have a dairy food safety license.

Letters/Problem solving/Q&A Section

I live in the city and don't have a cow to milk to make my cheese. I have been buying the Pauls/Parmalat unhomogenised milk from the supermarkets but I have just noticed that they have stopped making it in 2L cartons and can only get it by the litre. It is quite expensive. Is there another option for milk for cheesemaking? - Jenny

One of the most disappointing things for new cheesemakers is when they discover just how little cheese they can actually make per litre of milk. As a basic rule the yield of cheese is between 7-13%, with an average of 10%. That is, 1L of milk will give 100g of cheese, so

the less you can pay for your milk, the better. And unfortunately the reality is that no milk works as well as unhomogenised milk, which is quite expensive when buying from the supermarket. It would be ideal to find a source of milk fresh from a farm but this isn't as easy as it used to be. Changes to the dairy food safety laws mean that dairy farmers are no longer allowed to sell milk for human consumption to anyone that does not have a dairy food safety license.

You can use calcium solution with homogenised milk, but the reality is that it will never form a curd quite as well as unhomogenised milk will. So we've been

doing some experimenting, and have discovered a combination that works quite well. It's still not as good as unhomogenised milk, but it is the best alternative if you can't find unhomogenised milk or if you want to find a cheaper alternative. To make up a 10L batch of milk, use 9.5L of fresh skim milk from the supermarket, with 500ml of UHT cream (it needs to be longlife cream because it does not have any preservatives added as it is preserved through

ultra heat treatment). Then add calcium by the recommended rate. This combination makes a nice curd. And of course, remember that for products that don't use rennet, such as quark, cream cheese, whole milk ricotta, yoghurt, you can use UHT milk which is readily available and quite cheap.

I did the workshop on Sunday at Red Hill. I had such a wonderful day, you are such a great teacher. Thank you! I was so excited about doing the workshop and had to wait 6 months before I could get in and the wait was definitely worth it. Last night I sampled the mas-

carpone and this morning we had the quark with our breakfast. My husband is over the moon. He said the quark is just like it should be, and he has waited 15 years to taste such a thing in Australia (he has lived here 15 years now). So I think you should take that as a big compliment! Tonight we have grilled strawberries with mascarpone for dessert and I think the same amount of pride will be had as we consume it. So thank you, thank you, thank you! I don't know how else to describe how excited and pleased I am. I do have one question. I dried out my camembert yesterday for around 8 hours after sitting it in the brine. I then put it in its container in the esky. I just

don't know how "dry" it should be. It still feels wet to touch and it looks a little shiny on the sides so my heart tells me that it isn't dry enough, but of course I don't know anything about making camembert yet. Following the notes makes me think it should be OK as it was drying most of the day. Is there anyway of describing how dry it should be before it goes in the esky? I am not sure how dry "dry" is? Can you help? —Gil

You can do more damage to your cheese by having it too wet than too dry. Shiny is okay, but if it is wet to the touch then it is probably a little too wet. Opening up the maturing container/esky for a little while

longer and letting it dry out more is the best thing to do. Even if you end up drying it far longer than the recipe calls for, it is best to go by the actual appearance of the cheese rather than for the recipe.

I want to share with you my cheese & yoghurt making story...unfortunately not a happy one, if you don't count all the yummy cheesecakes!! My situation is probably a little different to most cheesemakers as I am currently living in North Sumatra, Indonesia (1000 metres altitude) and my mission is to make mozzarella & yoghurt using powdered milk (full cream instant). I have tried

several times (with just 1 litre of milk) but cannot get the curds to melt. The only pH test kit I could find here is a 1-14. I used calcium chloride flakes dissolved in water and added to the milk along with rennet & lipase. My equipment is very basic here i.e. no microwave etc. I have attached a

few photos of my dismal results! I am trying to source some buffalo milk which I'm pretty sure will work but it is difficult to get and also so expensive that I could not afford to use it regularly. My yoghurt is also a problem. It turns out sort of slimy (is this called stringy?) but tastes good. When I strain it through muslin it makes great cream cheese. I've tried with powdered milk and uht with the same results although I haven't yet tried adding skim milk powder as you suggest in your Q&A. Should I add calcium chloride to the milk for yoghurt? I would really appreciate any advice or suggestions before I give up! - Celine (continued on next page)





Letters/problem solving/Q&As continued from previous page

Wow, what persistence with your cheese and yoghurt making. I hope we can help you so you don't give up! Firstly, calcium won't be needed for your yoghurt. Calcium will only work with rennet set cheeses, so you shouldn't need to add it. The fact that your yoghurt is slimy with whatever milk you use indicates that it is an issue related to your setting temperature rather than the type of milk. If you can

maintain a higher temperature at the end of the setting period you should avoid this (remembering that sliminess is caused by the yoghurt setting at below 35 degrees).

Making cheese from powdered milk is never quite as good as fresh milk. The reason is twofold. Firstly, you can never know exactly how much the milk powder has been heat treated. Too much heat treatment will mean that rennet does not work and your milk will not set as well, if at all. Also, it is difficult to know how old the powdered milk is. As with regular milk, the fresher the better. Some cheeses will be easier to make than others. Given that you are using powdered milk, your curd doesn't look too bad—you should be

proud of yourself! Mozzarella is one of the most difficult cheeses to make under any circumstances as



you will have seen by the feature article in Cheese-a-holic Issue 2! The reason is the stretching stage—the curd needs to be in just the right pH zone—between pH 5.0 and 5.4 for it to stretch properly, difficult to measure and control with powdered milk and limited pH testing equipment. You should be able to have more success with other cheeses—I think Fetta would be much easier to make in your situation.

CHEESELINKS JANUARY SALE 2009

To celebrate the new year, we have decided to make certain products from our commercial range available for home cheesemakers. While clearing out our warehouse over Christmas, we noticed that we still had large amounts of certain items that we imported in bulk years ago for commercial cheesemakers. In order to get some money back from our purchases we have put them on our home cheesemaking supplies list and are selling them off at cost price or below. This means that matting and shelving is available up to 70% off the regular price. **The following matting and shelving options are available - used for draining curd and storing cheese during maturation:**

Matting P00729 used to be \$50 per metre, while stocks last we are selling it for only \$10 per half metre piece. **(Sold by the half metre - minimum purchase 0.5m)**

Matting P00676 used to be \$50 per metre, now only \$12.50 per half metre piece while stocks last. **(Minimum purchase 0.5m)**

Matting pieces P00725 -110cm x 66cm single piece - heavy duty ideal for storage - **usually \$58 per piece, now \$45 per piece**

Shelving pieces - perfect for storing cheeses during maturation as the strategically placed holes ensure air flow around the cheeses. **Formerly \$10 per piece, now only \$5.**

Locally made ricotta baskets—We have also uncovered an old pile of baskets in the back of our warehouse. They are not our usual imported baskets from Italy and we can't get any more of them, so they are only available while stocks last. The holes for draining are in the sides, not in the bottom, like the imported baskets. But we've tested



them out and they work well as ricotta baskets. We are offering them at the discount price of only 50c each, and we think they are a bargain.

We are also excited to be launching a new product this month - **special wraps for blue cheese**. These wraps are specially designed for blue cheese, with a silver foil outer

layer, and paper inner layer. Designed so the blue can 'breathe' and continue to mature during storage, these wraps will give home-made blue cheeses a really professional touch. Size: 19cm x 19cm.



Price: \$25.00 for a pack of 50.

New Little River cheesemaking workshop places now available—Camembert, Quarg, Mascarpone and Ricotta on February 27th and Mozzarella, Halloumi and Ricotta on March 27th. Call 0352831396 to book one of these places!



Cheeselinks
15 Minns Rd
P.O.Box 146
Little River
Victoria 3211
Australia

PHONE: 03 5283 1396
FAX: 03 5283 1096
www.cheeselinks.com.au
shop.cheeselinks.com.au
info@cheeselinks.com.au

Bringing cheese and yoghurt making to the kitchens of Australia!

Cheeselinks is an Australian business that is both family-owned and operated. The company was established in 1986 as Home Cheesemaking Supplies, specifically to provide quality cheesemaking ingredients and education to people who wanted to learn to make cheese in their own homes. Over time the business expanded and began to supply small cheese factories with cultures, baskets, and other equipment. The name was changed to Cheeselinks in 1999, to reflect the increasing service provided to commercial manufacturers. With master cheesemaker Carole Willman at the helm, Cheeselinks has over 20 years experience in cheesemaking training and education, serving both commercial cheese manufacturers, and home cheese and yoghurt makers.



Yoghurt Making Ideas and Information

Since we introduced the yoghurt maker, and there's been a flood of enquiries relating to yoghurt making. So we thought that for this month's issue we'd focus on information about making yoghurt and share some recipe ideas that we have collected from each other, and from our customers too. We're hoping that our readers will email us with more recipe ideas for great flavoured yoghurt that we can include in the next edition.

One question we've often been asked is why you should heat the milk to 90 degrees before making your yoghurt and whether this step is necessary. The short answer is that no it isn't necessary for health reasons, but if you are using fresh milk then it is necessary in order to make your yoghurt the right consistency. When you heat the milk you alter the structure of the protein which makes a much thicker lattice as it sets. Otherwise it will be like drinking yoghurt. The good news for lazy people is that UHT milk is already heat treated so you can skip the step and just put it into your yoghurt maker as it is!

Another question we are often asked is whether you can add flavourings directly to the milk before you add the starter. The answer is sometimes yes, sometimes no, depending on what ingredients you are adding. The yoghurt starter basically will break down the sugar in milk (lactose) and make lactic acid, which is what gives yoghurt that delicious, tart flavour. Some flavours that you might want to add will interfere with the acid production, others don't. As a general rule we suggest people add the flavours at the end just in case. Also, anything you add

to your milk at the start must be completely sterile, otherwise you could end up growing organisms that might spoil the flavour of your yoghurt, or worse, they might be harmful pathogens. For this reason you should make sure that any ingredients you add to your milk have been heat treated first, in order to sterilise them.

Ideas for flavouring your yoghurt:

Mixing jam or stewed fruit into natural yoghurt is a great way to make fruit flavoured yoghurt, and it is popular because you can do it instantly.

Another idea that we've tried is adding fruit roll ups (or natural fruit leather if you have it) to natural yoghurt the night before you plan to eat it. The moisture in the yoghurt soaks into the roll up overnight. This is a good idea if you like thicker yoghurt as it doesn't add extra moisture.

Vanilla is one of the most popular, and all you need to do is add a couple of drops of vanilla essence to your milk before you make the yoghurt.

The most unique recipe idea we've heard was from a customer from New Zealand who adds strawberry, banana or chocolate "Quik" to her milk before she adds the yoghurt culture, which makes a perfect

The most unique idea we've heard was from a customer from New Zealand who adds 'Quik' to her milk before she adds the yoghurt culture, which makes perfect home made 'yogo'

WHAT'S ON FEBRUARY MARCH 2009

Feb 14	St Kilda Workshop (Melbourne) - Romano, Ricotta, Yoghurt
Feb 15	Workshop in Warnambool—content to be announced
Feb 21-22	Camembert/Fetta workshops Small Cow Farm, Robertson, NSW
Feb 27-28	Little River Workshops—Camembert (places available) Cheddar (FULL)
Mar 1	CERES Workshop (Melbourne) – Camembert
Mar 7-8	Camembert/Purely Goat Workshop at Wingham, NSW
Mar 15	Bemboka Show —Carole judging Home Cheesemaking Section!
Mar 21-22	Camembert/Gouda Workshops in Canberra, ACT
Mar 21-22	Camembert/Fetta Workshop (run by Ros Garstone in conjunction with Cheeselinks) Margaret River, WA
Mar 27	Little River Workshop—Mozzarella (places available)
Mar 28	Red Hill Show

homemade 'yogo'. Her toddler twins absolutely adore it!

You'll need to use trial and error to determine the right amount of these ingredients to add to make it to your liking. People prefer different flavour profiles and different brands of jam/essence etc will be stronger flavours than others. The great thing about making it yourself is you can make it exactly how you like it!