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## EC9934 Cheese Making in the Home

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9934

CHEESE MAKING IN THE HOME

The History

The origin of cheese dates back so far that it cannot be said with assurance who first discovered it. Legend tells us of a lone Asian traveler who in preparing for a journey, filled a container which was made from a dried sheep stomach, with milk. After many hours of travel he stopped to refresh himself with a drink of milk. Unable to pour any liquid from his container and puzzled as to what had happened to the contents, he cut open the skin and there, much to his amazement, he found in place of milk, a mass of white curd.

Long before America was known to the world or even before the time of Christ, we find that cheese constituted one means of reckoning wealth among the wandering tribes of Asia and southern Europe. The boy David of Bible times is spoken of as carrying cheese to the captain. It is mentioned as a food among the patriarchs and prophets of Bible times, and at the feast of Roman Emperors. Wandering Asiatic tribes brought the art of cheese making to Europe where later it became one of the most important industries. Because of favorable conditions the industry developed in various sections which in the course of time resulted in different varieties.

At the time immigrants came to America, cheese making was rather generally known in Europe so that the early settlers brought with them and practiced the established methods used in their particular locality. English immigrants carried English practices across the Atlantic. Climatic conditions in parts of this country and certain parts of England being somewhat similar, have helped the manufacture of this cheese to predominate here. The term "cheddar" comes from the name of the town of Cheddar in Somersetshire in England.

Between 1820 to 1840 a small export trade in cheddar type of cheese was started. The increased demand for cheddar type cheese brought about changes in the manufacturing. About 1851 a factory system was started. This system saved labor and brought higher prices for the product. In America, Jesse Williams of Oneida County, New York, is supposed by many to have been the first to build and operate a cheese factory. From 1860 to 1870, a large number of cheese factories were built in New York and Wisconsin. States now ranking in cheese production are Wisconsin, New York, Michigan, Ohio and Pennsylvania.

In Nebraska the 1860 records show that cheddar cheese was made and sold in the southeast section of the state. No doubt many households made this type of cheese when milk was available and the cheese factory followed the increase in cow population. From 1889 to 1895 the number of factories increased and then decreased until about 1919. During the next 10 years there was an increase especially in the North Platte Valley around Scottsbluff. Since 1930 the number of plants have again decreased until at the present time only a few plants are in operation in the state; the major production being at three points, the Scottsbluff territory, North Loup and Lincoln, Nebraska.

The great variation in cheese production throughout the years indicates that much cheese is brought into the state for consumption from other cheese producing states. The most economical place to make cheese, of course, is where the milk is produced.

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## Primitive Methods of Making Cheese

In the early industry of cheese making, the work was done on the farms by women. The methods were crude, the processes simple and the cheese was made in a more or less haphazard way. The milk used for cheese making usually came from two milkings. A small amount was heated to a comparatively high temperature and then poured into the entire amount. By transferring milk of different temperatures back and forth, the desired temperature was finally obtained. Because of the lack of thermometers, the correct temperature was determined by the sense of feeling. One of the serious difficulties was to secure rennet of a uniform strength. The type of cheese made was dependent upon the kind of cheese desired and the knowledge of the individual making it.

The nationality of the people and the taste for certain types of flavors have been responsible for the development of numerous kinds of cheese throughout the world. While a great many are made from whole milk, part skimmed or skimmed milk, whey is used in some cases.

### Classes of Cheese

The varieties of cheeses fall into three classes, namely, hard cheeses, semi-soft cheeses, and soft cheeses. There are probably about 18 distinct varieties even though we find approximately 400 names. Many of these have arisen locally and have been named after towns or communities. The kinds are too numerous to mention, but a few of the more widely used varieties are:

<u>Hard</u>	<u>Semi-Soft</u>	<u>Soft</u>
Parmesan (Italian)	Brick	Cottage
Caciocavallo (Italian)	Limburg (Belgium)	Cream
Sapsage (Switzerland)	Gorgonzola (Italian)	Neufchatel (French)
Cheddar (American)	Brie (French)	Camembert (French)
Emmenthaler (Swiss)	La Trappe (Canadian)	
Primost (Norwegian)	Roquefort (French)	
Edam (Dutch)		
Stilton (English)		

### The Type to be Made

The housewife in selecting the type of cheese to be made in the home should consider the following points.

1. Milk available
  - (a) kind (whole, skim or whey)
  - (b) amount
2. Equipment available
3. When cheese is to be used
  - (a) soon (soft type)
  - (b) short storage (semi-hard)
  - (c) long storage (hard type)
4. Storage facilities
5. Desirable flavor

After the type of cheese to be made has been decided upon further information and directions may be obtained from your county extension agent.

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For further information see: (1) Cheese Production in Nebraska - Bulletin 17 - Conservation Dept. of the Conservation and Survey Division of the Uni. of Nebr. Walter Kollmorgan, July, 1938. (2) Varieties of Cheese - U.S.D.A. Bulletin No. 608, 1932.

(Adapted and revised from Extension Circular 924 by Dr. P. A. Downs, Dairy Department and Miss Mabel Doremus, State Extension Agent, Foods and Nutrition.).