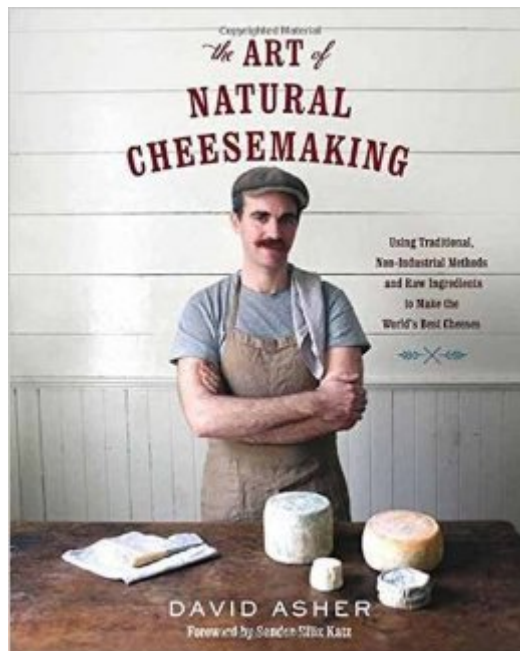


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The Art Of Natural Cheesemaking: Using Traditional, Non-Industrial Methods And Raw Ingredients To Make The World's Best Cheeses



Synopsis

Including more than 35 step-by-step recipes from the Black Sheep School of Cheesemaking Most DIY cheesemaking books are hard to follow, complicated, and confusing, and call for the use of packaged freeze-dried cultures, chemical additives, and expensive cheesemaking equipment. For though bread baking has its sourdough, brewing its lambic ales, and pickling its wild fermentation, standard Western cheesemaking practice today is decidedly unnatural. In *The Art of Natural Cheesemaking*, David Asher practices and preaches a traditional, but increasingly countercultural, way of making cheese—one that is natural and intuitive, grounded in ecological principles and biological science. This book encourages home and small-scale commercial cheesemakers to take a different approach by showing them:

- How to source good milk, including raw milk;
- How to keep their own bacterial starter cultures and fungal ripening cultures;
- How make their own rennet—and how to make good cheese without it;
- How to avoid the use of plastic equipment and chemical additives; and
- How to use appropriate technologies.

Introductory chapters explore and explain the basic elements of cheese: milk, cultures, rennet, salt, tools, and the cheese cave. The fourteen chapters that follow each examine a particular class of cheese, from kefir and paneer to washed-rind and alpine styles, offering specific recipes and handling advice. The techniques presented are direct and thorough, fully illustrated with hand-drawn diagrams and triptych photos that show the transformation of cheeses in a comparative and dynamic fashion. *The Art of Natural Cheesemaking* is the first cheesemaking book to take a political stance against Big Dairy and to criticize both standard industrial and artisanal cheesemaking practices. It promotes the use of ethical animal rennet and protests the use of laboratory-grown freeze-dried cultures. It also explores how GMO technology is creeping into our cheese and the steps we can take to stop it. This book sounds a clarion call to cheesemakers to adopt more natural, sustainable practices. It may well change the way we look at cheese, and how we make it ourselves.

Book Information

Paperback: 320 pages

Publisher: Chelsea Green Publishing (July 8, 2015)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1603585788

ISBN-13: 978-1603585781

Product Dimensions: 7.8 x 0.4 x 10.1 inches

Shipping Weight: 2 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars Â Â See all reviewsÂ (52 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #110,048 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #50 inÂ Books > Cookbooks, Food & Wine > Cooking Methods > Raw #54 inÂ Books > Cookbooks, Food & Wine > Cooking by Ingredient > Cheese & Dairy #58 inÂ Books > Business & Money > Industries > Restaurant & Food

Customer Reviews

I write this review on the day of release, after having read through the book somewhat thoroughly. Obviously, It's hard to write a review on a recipe book without having tried a few recipes from it at least, this being a cheesemaking book and having most of the recipes require months, I hope you'll humor me. I have many cheesemaking books. I've had successes making various cheeses, but I've never gotten serious about the craft. I just may after reading this. The reason? Everything is so APPROACHABLE. David Asher is to cheesemaking as Sandor Katz is to fermentation (a point further made since Mr. Katz wrote the foreword.) He takes something that's been done for ages that's been so sterilized to be unrecognizable, and takes it back to how it's been done for ages. I'm sure many of you who are interested in cheesemaking have looked at recipes for a cheese and thought "how did they get a thermophilic culture, keep it at exactly 82 degrees for 80 minutes over a wooden fire, and keep it in a sterile cheese cave?" Of course they didn't, they had tradition. What we have now is meticulous and repeatable, but I'd argue is a bit soulless. What Mr. Asher is bringing back is the soul. He steps you logically through every step. He even shows you how to HARVEST YOUR OWN RENNET. Think about that for a second. When was the last time you saw a cheesemaking book go into more than a page of info about rennet? I actually happened upon David's (very infrequently updated) blog by happenstance, looking for a recipe for homemade blue cheese. I loved the way he wrote, and the passion he clearly held for cheesemaking. It carried over well in this book. It's an absolute joy, and so approachable. If you're anything like I am, a lot of cheesemaking is a mystery.

I have been making cheese for a couple of years with raw milk from my goats and my cow share. I am fairly serious about it, I have 4 or so cheese books and various go-to websites that I have relied on. I have experimented with a number of different styles which have come out good enough to have a healthy little barter business with my friends and neighbours. But one thing always bothered me: why did I have to buy this stuff in little frozen packets to make cheese? Why did I have to sterilise everything with bleach solution? 1000 years ago in France, they weren't handing out little

packets of moulds and cultures! And I milk my goats by hand- nothing sterile about that process! Asher's book is the one I have been waiting for. His unequivocal answer to those questions is YOU DON'T. As other reviewers have noted, it is a bit early to pass judgement on the recipes as it will be weeks and months before I have the final products (watch this space), but the framework he sets out resonates with my farming philosophy and understanding of milk microbiology in a way that no other cheesemaking method has. I also did a workshop with him which was definitely worthwhile- keep an eye on his website for his events. If you want to make cheese in the natural, traditional way, THIS is the book to buy.update: Now I have delved into the book and am giving it a workout. chevre: Awesome. Better than the chevre I used to make with commercial starters. Dream cheese: incredibly easy to make and much better than cream cheese. Especially for those who are freaked out by the thickeners and other weird things in commercial cream cheese. Camembert: in the cave to age, but so far looking and smelling wonderful. Mason Jar St. Marcellin: in the process of draining, but tasting great so far.

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