

Got Cheese?

WHAT'S THE Big Idea?

Interdependence Cycles

Materials

- *Extra Cheese, Please* by Cris Peterson
- ingredients for cheese making (see Recipe Card)
- sauce pan
- wooden spoon
- colander
- cheesecloth or a fine mesh strainer
- two bowls

Enduring Understandings

- Milk changes from a liquid into a solid, cheese, when a certain process is followed.
- Cheese is made from milk.
- Milk comes from cows.
- Cheese can have many different tastes and forms.

Objectives

- Children demonstrate how to follow a recipe to make cheese.
- Children show interest and curiosity about how cheese is made.
- Children play being a cheese maker.
- Children understand that food comes from nature.



Children begin making cheese by stirring the milk mixture over heat until the milk starts to curdle.

Directions

1. Ask the children if they know what cheese is made from. Do they like cheese? What are their favorite kinds? See how far back they can trace the food chain: cheese -> milk -> cow -> water + grass + sunlight.
2. Read *Extra Cheese, Please* by Cris Peterson. Discuss the cheesemaking process with children. Ask if the children would like to make cheese. Make sure to wash hands and discuss good hygiene when cooking with children.
3. Show the children the ingredients and ask if they have any ideas about how to make cheese. Consider writing the recipe out for children to follow along. Explain the cheese-making process, then begin. Allow the children to help whenever possible. Ask children to use their “owl eyes” to observe the process. First, put the milk into the saucepan, then add the vinegar or lemon juice. Heat the milk mixture for 8–10 minutes on low heat, stirring occasionally until it starts to curdle.
4. Remove the pan from the heat, but continue stirring until all the milk has curdled. It has now separated into curds, which is the solid part, and whey, which is the liquid. Allow the children to taste it if they like and see what Little Miss Muffet was eating!
5. Have the children line the colander with two layers of cheesecloth and set it over a large bowl. Pour in the curds and whey.
6. Carefully gather the four corners of the cheesecloth together and twist it to form a bag around the curds. Continue twisting to squeeze out as much whey as possible.



Little Miss Muffet's Cheese Curds

INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups milk
- 3 tbsp. of lemon juice or vinegar
- a pinch of salt

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Put the milk into the saucepan, then add the vinegar or lemon juice. Heat the milk for 8–10 minutes on low heat, stirring occasionally until it starts to curdle.
 2. Remove the pan from the heat, and continue stirring until all the milk has curdled. It has now separated into curds, which is the solid part, and whey, which is the liquid.
 3. Line the colander with two layers of cheesecloth and set it over a large bowl. Pour the curds and whey into the colander.
 4. Carefully gather the four corners of the cheesecloth together and twist them to form a bag around the curds. Continue twisting to squeeze out as much whey as possible.
 5. Next place the curds into another bowl, add some salt to taste, and have the children stir. You can also add fruit or herbs.
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7. Next, place the curds into another bowl, add some salt to taste, and have the children stir it up. You can also add fruit or herbs. Ask the children to predict how it will taste. Consider dividing up the cheese curds and making several different flavors, then doing a taste test to compare.
 8. Process and reflect on the experience with the children by engaging in a conversation guided by the discussion questions.

Discussion Questions

- What did we start with? (*milk*)
- Where did the milk come from? (*a cow*)
- What did we add to it? (*lemon juice and heat*)
- How did it change? Describe what happened to the milk. (*The milk solids, called the curds, separate from the whey.*)
- Does this cheese taste like other cheese you have eaten?
- What are some of your favorite foods that include cheese?

Extension

- “Cheese tasting:” Taste a variety of cheesed and compare them to the cheese you made. Graph favorites or write descriptions of textures and tastes.