



The Art of Natural Cheesemaking

Using Traditional, Non-Industrial and Raw Ingredients to Make the World's Best Cheeses

David Asher

Foreword by Sandor Ellix Katz

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Full-color photos throughout

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“ Guerilla cheesemaker David Asher wants to help you take back your cheese. ”

David Asher practices and preaches a traditional, but increasingly countercultural, way of making cheese—one that is natural, intuitive, and grounded in ecological principles and biological science.

The Art of Natural Cheesemaking presents Asher's down-to-earth, accessible, organically inspired approach to cheesemaking, which is sure to inspire home- and small-scale commercial cheesemakers. In this wide-ranging book, cheesemakers of all skill levels will learn how to source good milk, including raw milk; how to keep their own bacterial starter cultures and fungal ripening cultures; how to work with raw milk's beneficial microbial community; how to avoid the use of plastic equipment and chemical additives; and more.

Introductory chapters explore the basic elements of cheesemaking: 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, offering specific recipes and handling advice. The techniques Asher presents are direct and thorough, with triptych photos that show the transformation of milk to cheese in a comparative and dynamic fashion.

The Art of Natural Cheesemaking is also the first cheesemaking book to take a political stance against Big Dairy and to criticize both standard industrial and artisanal cheesemaking practices. It encourages readers to source good raw milk for their cheesemaking, promotes the use of ethical animal rennet, and protests the use of laboratory-grown freeze-dried culture, and explores how GMO technology is creeping into our cheese.

A clarion call to cheesemakers to adopt more natural, sustainable, even sovereign, practices, this book may usher in a new way in which we look at cheese.

"If eating is a political act, then cheesemaking is even more so. But how can the act of making cheese take a stand against corporate culture when corporations control the very culture that makes our cheese?" writes Asher. "Making our own cheese naturally assures us that the ingredients used and the processes involved are up to our exacting standards. Making cheese reconnects us with the land, the livestock, and the farmers that feed us."



David Asher is an organic farmer, goatherd, and farmstead cheesemaker who lives on the gulf islands of British Columbia. As a guerrilla cheesemaker, Asher explores traditionally cultured, noncorporate methods of cheesemaking. Though mostly self-taught, he picked up his cheese skills from various teachers, including a Brown Swiss cow named Sundae on Cortes Island. Asher's Black Sheep School of Cheesemaking offers cheesemaking workshops in partnership with food-sovereignty-minded organizations and communities. His workshops teach a cheesemaking method that is natural, DIY, and well suited to any home kitchen. He has been teaching cheesemaking for over seven years.

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