

Lesson Plan: Making Halloumi Cheese

Subject: Culinary Arts / Food Science

Grade Level: High School Culinary Students

Duration: Approximately 2.5 - 3 hours

YouTube Video Link: [Watch the Halloumi Cheese Making Process](#)

Objectives

- **Knowledge:** Understand the traditional process of making Halloumi cheese and the science behind curdling milk.
- **Skills:** Learn cheese-making techniques such as heating, cutting curds, pressing cheese, and cooking halloumi for consumption.
- **Attitudes:** Develop an appreciation for traditional Cypriot recipes and artisanal food preparation techniques.

Materials Needed

Ingredients

- 4 liters of goat's milk
- 2 liters of sheep's milk
- 1/4 teaspoon of liquid rennet diluted in 1/4 cup of non-chlorinated water

Equipment

- Large pot
- Thermometer (for liquids, up to 100°C/212°F)
- Long knife (for cutting curds)
- Slotted spoon
- Cheesecloth
- Colander or cheese mold
- Cheese press or heavy object (for pressing the cheese)
- Measuring cups and spoons
- Stove or heat source
- Sanitized workspace and utensils

Lesson Outline

1. Introduction (15 minutes)

- **Icebreaker Discussion:** Ask students what cheeses they know or have tried. Introduce Halloumi, a traditional Cypriot cheese, and discuss its history and uses.
- **Objective Overview:** Explain what students will learn and accomplish by the end of the lesson, including hands-on cheese-making techniques.

2. Safety and Sanitation Briefing (10 minutes)

- Emphasize the importance of hygiene when working with dairy products.
- Demonstrate proper handwashing, sanitizing utensils, and handling ingredients.
- Highlight the need for precision in handling rennet and milk temperatures.

3. The Science of Cheese-Making (10 minutes)

- **Lecture:** Explain the role of rennet in coagulating milk and how different temperatures affect the cheese-making process.
- **Key Concepts:**
 - Coagulation of milk proteins.
 - The difference between curds and whey.
 - Traditional vs. industrial cheese-making.

4. Cooking Activity: Making Halloumi

a. Heating the Milk (15 minutes)

- **Instructions:**
 - Combine 4 liters of goat's milk and 2 liters of sheep's milk in a large pot.
 - Heat the milk over medium-low heat until it reaches a temperature of about 32°C (90°F).
- **Discussion:**
 - The importance of gradual heating to avoid scorching the milk.
 - The effect of using goat's and sheep's milk on the flavor and texture of the cheese.

b. Adding Rennet (5 minutes)

- **Instructions:**
 - Pour the diluted rennet into the milk while stirring gently.
 - Heat the milk to 38°C (100°F) while stirring occasionally.
 - Remove from heat and let the mixture sit undisturbed for 30-40 minutes, or until a clean break forms in the curd.
- **Discussion:**

- What is a "clean break" and how to check for it.
- How rennet works to coagulate milk proteins.

c. Cutting the Curds (10 minutes)

- **Instructions:**
 - Use a long knife to cut the curds into small cubes, about 1-2 centimeters in size.
- **Discussion:**
 - How cutting the curds affects the texture and moisture content of the cheese.
 - The importance of uniformity in curd size for consistent cooking.

d. Cooking the Curds (30 minutes)

- **Instructions:**
 - Return the pot to the heat and gently heat the curds to 42°C (108°F).
 - Stir occasionally to prevent the curds from sticking together.
 - Maintain this temperature for 20-30 minutes.
- **Discussion:**
 - The role of heat in further expelling whey from the curds.
 - Stirring techniques to ensure even cooking.

e. Draining the Curds (1-2 hours passive time)

- **Instructions:**
 - Use a slotted spoon to transfer the curds to a cheesecloth-lined colander or mold.
 - Allow the whey to drain off for 1-2 hours until the curds are firm.
- **Activity:** While the curds are draining, students can clean up their stations and prepare for the next step.
- **Discussion:**
 - How the draining process impacts the final texture of the cheese.
 - Traditional uses of whey in other recipes or dairy products.

f. Pressing the Cheese (2-4 hours passive time)

- **Instructions:**
 - Once the curds have drained, place a weight on top of the cheese to press it.
 - Press the cheese for 2-4 hours until it holds its shape.
- **Activity:** While waiting for the cheese to press, students can prepare garnishes or sides for serving halloumi later.
- **Discussion:**

- How pressing removes excess moisture and gives halloumi its characteristic firmness.

5. Cooking and Tasting Halloumi (30 minutes)

a. Cooking Halloumi (15 minutes)

- **Instructions:**
 - Slice the pressed cheese into pieces.
 - Grill or fry the halloumi until it is golden brown on the outside and soft on the inside.
- **Activity:** Have students cook and taste their own halloumi creations.
- **Discussion:**
 - The unique texture of halloumi and why it doesn't melt when cooked.
 - Flavor profiles and how halloumi can be paired with other ingredients (e.g., salads, vegetables, or bread).

Assessment

- **Participation:** Active involvement in each step of the cheese-making process.
- **Practical Skills:** Ability to measure, heat, cut, and press the cheese with precision.
- **Knowledge Check:** Ask students to explain the process and key concepts learned during the session.
- **Reflection:** Have students share their experiences or challenges in making halloumi.

Closure (10 minutes)

- **Recap:** Review the cheese-making process, from heating the milk to pressing and grilling halloumi.
- **Class Discussion:** Invite students to share what they enjoyed most about the process and any tips for improvement.
- **Encouragement:** Suggest they try making halloumi at home or experiment with different flavors and accompaniments.

Extensions

- **Homework Assignment:** Research other cheeses made with similar techniques (e.g., paneer, ricotta) and write a comparison.
- **Culinary Project:** Create a recipe using halloumi as a key ingredient, such as a sandwich, salad, or appetizer.

Resources

- **Handouts:**
 - Step-by-step guide for making halloumi with pictures.
 - Glossary of cheese-making terms (e.g., rennet, curd, whey).
- **Recommended Reading:**
 - Articles on the history and cultural significance of halloumi in Cypriot cuisine.
 - Videos demonstrating traditional cheese-making techniques.

Notes for the Instructor

- **Preparation:** Ensure all ingredients and equipment are available and sanitized before class.
- **Safety Considerations:** Monitor students when handling hot liquids and sharp knives.
- **Adaptations:** For a faster class, pre-prepare the curds and demonstrate the pressing and grilling steps.