

Shropshire Blue Cheese Recipe (2-Gallon Batch)

Optimized for Glengarry Cheesemaking supplies, Biena Cultures, and Annatto. This creates a stunning orange, creamy, and sharply veined blue cheese (approx. 2 lbs).

Ingredients & Equipment

- **2 Gallons Whole Cow's Milk** (Not ultra-pasteurized; higher fat cream-line or whole milk works best)
- **1/4 tsp Biena Mesophilic Culture** (Aromatic Type B or Meso Type A for standard acidification)
- **1/16 tsp Penicillium Roqueforti** (Blue mold powder)
- **1.5 to 2 tsp Annatto Liquid Extract** (Diluted in 1/4 cup cool water to achieve the traditional deep orange color)
- **1/2 tsp Calcium Chloride** (Diluted in 1/4 cup cool, non-chlorinated water if using pasteurized store milk)
- **1.5 ml Single-Strength Liquid Rennet** (Approx. 1/3 tsp, diluted in 1/4 cup cool, non-chlorinated water)
- **2 tbsp Fine Cheese Salt** (Non-iodized, for dry salting curds later)
- **Saturated Brine:** 1.6 lbs (720g) non-iodized salt dissolved in 2 liters of water (as corrected previously)

Step-by-Step Instructions

1. Warming & Coloration: Heat 2 gallons of milk slowly to **86°F (30°C)**. Stir in the diluted **Annatto** thoroughly until the milk takes on a uniform, deep peach/orange hue.

2. Inoculation: Sprinkle 1/4 tsp **Biena Mesophilic Culture** and 1/16 tsp **Penicillium Roqueforti** on top of the milk. Let rehydrate for 2 minutes, then stir gently using an up-and-down motion for 1 minute. Cover and let ripen for **45 to 60 minutes** at 86°F.

3. Coagulation: Add diluted **Calcium Chloride** and stir well. Add diluted **Rennet**, stirring gently for 1 minute. Still the milk with your spoon. Cover and leave undisturbed for **45 to 60 minutes** until a clean break is achieved.

4. Cutting Curds: Cut the curd into **1/2-inch cubes**. Let them rest for 10 minutes to firm up and begin expelling whey.

5. Gentle Cooking & Resting: Over the next 45 to 60 minutes, stir the curds very gently every 5 minutes. Keep the temperature steady at **86°F (30°C)**. The goal is to shrink the curds slightly but keep them moist and tender so they don't fuse completely into a solid block later.

6. Draining & Matting: Pour the curds into a cheesecloth-lined colander. Tie the corners of the cloth and let the curds drain for 30 minutes. Hang or lay the bag flat, flipping it every 30 minutes for 1 to 2 hours until it forms a cohesive matte slab.

7. Milling & Salting: Break the curd slab by hand into rough, bite-sized chunks (about 1/2 to 1 inch wide). Sprinkle **2 tablespoons of fine cheese salt** evenly over the milled curds and toss gently to distribute. The salt stops further acid development and prepares the surfaces for open texture nesting.

8. Molding (No Press): Pack the salted curds into a sanitized cylinder mold without a follower or weights. Shropshire Blue relies on gravity knitting. Over the next 24 hours at room temp, flip the mold every few hours (initially after 30 mins, then 1 hour, then every 4-6 hours) to distribute moisture evenly while leaving small internal air pockets for the blue mold.

9. Brining (Optional Hardening): Remove the cheese from the mold. Submerge in your **saturated brine** for 4 to 6 hours to firm up the rind, then pat dry. Let sit at room temperature for 2 days until dry to the touch.

10. Piercing & Aging: Move the cheese to an aging environment at **52°F–55°F (11°C–13°C) and 90% humidity**. After 1 to 2 weeks, when the rind begins to look dry or lightly dusted, pierce the cheese vertically and horizontally with a sanitized stainless steel skewer or knitting needle (about 20-30 holes). This introduces oxygen to the internal air spaces, activating the *Penicillium Roqueforti*. Age for 8 to 12 weeks, turning twice a week.