

# The Making of Beaufort

The different stages of production allow us to obtain a delicate and creamy product. As soon as the milk arrives at the cooperative, our cheesemakers and cheese assistants get to work and start the process of making Beaufort. The expertise of the production staff follows that of the milk collectors. The milk is first curdled. After curdling and then cutting the curd, the “cooking” brings the curd-whey mixture to a temperature of 54 °C, hence the belonging of Beaufort to the cheese family of “cooked doughs”. The curd-whey mixture is then drained and the curd is molded in characteristic traditional molds. The cheeses are then pressed for 20 hours, hence the notion of “pressed doughs” which, added to that of “cooked doughs”, legitimizes the belonging of Beaufort to the cheese family of “cooked pressed doughs”. After salting, the cheese will be matured in the cellar. Concretely, there are 6 distinctive steps that allow us to obtain a soft and creamy Beaufort.

1. **Filling the Tanks.** The fresh milk from the mixture of the two milkings collected the same morning is poured into copper tanks as soon as it arrives at the cooperative. Large dishes are made using copper utensils, large cheeses are made in copper tanks. Each of them can contain about 6,000 liters, which corresponds to the production of 12 Beauforts. On average, for a 40 kg Beaufort, it takes between 400 and 450 liters of milk. This represents 10 liters of milk for 1 kg of cheese.
2. **Curdling the Milk.** When it reaches 33 °C, natural and traditional rennet from the abomasum of unweaned calves is added in a preparation carefully dosed by the cheesemaker. This mixture also contains natural “wild” ferments that will play a role during pressing. This is renneting, which causes the milk to curdle. This action allows us to obtain what we call a “cake”. It is coagulated milk, also called “curd”. During the formation and hardening of this “cake”, the cheesemaker performs the “buttonhole” test before deciding to move on to the next phase of curdling.
3. **Curd Cutting.** The curd is cut using a curd cutter. This allows the exudation of whey (also known as “buttermilk”) to begin. Curd cutting is a delicate step in the making of Beaufort. It requires great expertise on the part of the cheesemaker. Indeed, he must practice careful cutting. It should be neither too fine nor too coarse. A misjudgment can alter the quality of the cheeses.
4. **Stirring and Cooking.** The mixture of curd grains and whey are then gradually heated to 54 °C and constantly stirred. This allows the buttermilk to slowly exude. At the end of heating, the cheesemaker must perform the “dough” test in order to decide the end of cooking and move on to draining, then molding and pressing.
5. **Molding and Pressing.** After draining and separating the whey, the curd grains are collected in a linen cloth and molded in a wooden circle typical of Beaufort. It gives the heel of the cheese its characteristic concave shape. The cheeses are then pressed for about twenty hours. They are turned several times, the linen cloths are wrung out or changed, and the circles are tightened to complete the drainage and

promote the action of the ferments added at the beginning of production. During the first turning, we affix a blue casein plate that certifies the Beaufort and ensures its traceability.

6. **Salting.** The Beauforts are then left to rest only in their circle and without their cloth for 24 hours so that they can cool down. They are then immersed in a bath of salt-saturated water or brine. This step allows the beginning of salting and contributes to the formation of the crust. The cheesemakers and cheese assistants have then finished their work. The cellar masters or refiners now come into play. The cheeses are placed in the maturing cellar three days after their production and will remain there for several months for the long and patient work of maturing. The maturing of Beaufort by the cooperative's cellar masters The cooperative's cellar masters take care of the Beauforts and even pamper them in order to allow their maturing and to sublime the aromas of this product recognized as one of the jewels of the Savoyard terroir. They strive to achieve perfect maturing. Unlike wine, if the maturing time is too long, it can harm the richness of the aroma of the Beaufort product and denature its taste qualities. Depending on everyone's taste and the seasons, a maturing time the cheeses that we offer have undergone a maturing of 7 to 12 months (sometimes 13 months). During their long stay in the cellar, where the ideal temperature is around 10 °C, the cheeses are salted, rubbed and turned several times a week at the beginning of maturing in order to form as quickly as possible the yellow-orange to brown crust which will "protect" the dough and allow it to develop its aromas. Thanks to his know-how, the cellar master ensures that the crust takes a uniform color and with as few defects as possible. His mission also consists in ensuring that the crust does not degrade during the long months of maturing.

This long-term work is directly linked to the quality of the milk and the production. It allows to improve the aromas and authentic flavors of Beaufort but is dependent on the work of the milk producers and cheesemakers who have worked upstream. The making of Beaufort is a chain where each link plays an essential role in success. The final product... A Beaufort with exquisite aromas.

You can enjoy it on a platter, after the meal and accompanied by a good wine from Savoie. Beaufort enhances many hot preparations such as gratins and it is the essential element of the Savoyard fondue. It is appreciated in small cubes as an aperitif. Traveling well, it can easily accompany you on a picnic or hike.