

## Linuxboy's Rind Treatment Tips

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If you are going au naturel with the rind, it is imperative that it is protected. Alpkasere posted about this, and if I can summarize again one of my posts from a few years ago. Here's what you need to focus on for rind management:

- **Protect the cheese inside.** Rinds are not exactly throw-away because many times, they can be better than the cheese (parmigiano-reggiano), but you're nurturing the cheese inside.
- To protect it, this starts immediately **during/post press**, as I detail in the tomme thread for how to create an inclusion-free rind and how to use cloth. There are many options here, detailed below.

To protect the rind, you must focus on the physical barrier that you can create between the outer world and the inner cheese (that'd be a great book title: finding your inner cheese). To create this barrier, here's the comprehensive list of options:

- **Chemically and persistently remove.** PITA, I think, but your options are to use natamycin, sorbate, acids, salt, etc
- **Dehydrate the outer "shell".** Usually, this is a precursor that complements other methods, but it is possible to do nothing more than to salt cheese and create a low surface Aw where little grows. Parmigiano-reggiano does this, in addition to natural loss of fat during aging to condition the rind.
- **Protect with some natural or synthetic material.** This is the full range of all wraps... using leaves, using lard and linen, using bags, using wax, painting with PVA, etc.
- **Create predominantly mold shells** such as done in bloomy types. But soft bloomies are not the only application. You can use a low MFFB cheese and spray it with *p. candidum* and bloom it up. Some tommes are like this. The mold creates a whole other barrier membrane that protects the cheese and flavors it.
- **Create predominantly bacterial shell** These are your lightweight smears like limburger. The mechanism here is that bacteria form slime (aka biofilm). Strep family, *brevibacteria*, many others form slime. This slime is a barrier, it goes in all the gaps and cracks and will protect the cheese, provided the smear is done well. Of course, the consequence is proteolysis, so for a soft cheese with high MFFB, it won't last long.
- **Create mixed/morge shell** Most of the great cheeses out there rely on an ecosystem and ripening cascade of yeast, bacteria, and mold. This is the most complex style, and most varied. But the premise here is that you craft a custom cascade based on the cheese. It has to make sense, though. If you're doing a soft cheese and then age it out with a bloomy rind, you can't just start washing it in blinens for too long. The premise, though, is that you create a barrier same as with the simpler rinds, but it just happens to be more complex. This relies on a physical "shell" formed by the organisms themselves and their biofilm.

How you manage the cheese after press is up to you. For mold-only styles (meaning *candidum* and *geo*), they coat so heavily, that nooks and crannies and cracks are not an issue. But whenever you get into mixed variations where you start with naked cheese, or have ambient flora that are undesirable,

inclusions are not that great. If ambient mold flora are tasty, mold in inclusions can be amazing (see british cheddar types with blue infections).

For anyone starting out, I would start with one of the easier rind management options (wax, bag, straight bloomy, etc) than trying to manage anything morege-like.