

CLAWSON FARMS BLUE STILTON

THE BASICS

MAKE:	Crumbly
SUB MAKE:	Curd from a single day
POST-MAKE:	Internal (blue) mould
SUB POST-MAKE:	Natural rind
TYPICAL AGE PROFILE:	8-14 weeks
APPROXIMATE WEIGHT(S):	8kg
DIMENSIONS:	22.5cm , 25cm
GEOGRAPHICAL ORIGIN:	Leicestershire, England
PROTECTED STATUS:	PDO
SPECIES OF MILKING ANIMAL:	Cow
BREED OF COW:	Various breeds
RAW/PASTEURISED MILK:	Pasteurised
VEGETARIAN/ANIMAL RENNET:	Vegetarian
COMMONLY ENCOUNTERED VARIATIONS:	White Stilton



THE STORY

Leicestershire-based Long Clawson Dairy began making cheese in 1912 when 12 local farmers came together to form a co-operative. The business remains a co-operative today, owned by around 30 local dairy farms within 30 miles of the dairy. Their milk is used to make Stilton, Shropshire Blue and a range of hard and flavoured cheeses at the dairy in the village of Long Clawson. Britain's largest Stilton producer, Clawson makes its famous blue cheese following the specifications set out in Stilton's PDO. Starter cultures and the blue mould *Penicillium roqueforti* are added to pasteurised milk, before vegetarian rennet is added and a curd is formed. This is then cut into half-inch (1.3cm) cubes and drained overnight in the vat, before milling, salting and moulding in cylindrical hoops the next day.

The curd-filled moulds are turned (Stilton is not pressed), before the cheeses are demoulded after five days and the sides smoothed and sealed ('rubbed up'). The cheeses are pierced at 4-6 weeks to allow oxygen to penetrate and the blue mould to grow. The cheese is aged for between 8-12 weeks.

THE CHARACTER

Each Clawson Stilton is individually graded. Some cheeses are ready at eight weeks when they are crumbly and pale with fresh lactic notes, while others are aged up to 12 months becoming creamier and more savoury with a smoother golden paste and dark blue veins. In general, the flavour of Stilton is complex with sweet, salty and savoury notes, plus hints of fruit and spice, while the rind varies from golden brown to dark grey.

PERFECT PARTNERS:

Anything with sweetness works well, such as tawny Port, dessert wines and stout. Also try accompaniments, such as honey, walnuts, figs or even a slice of chocolate brownie or fruit cake.