Jānu Siers (Summer solstice cheese)

Ingredients:

- Water - 2 cups
- 2% milk - 4 litres
- Eggs - 6
- Dry pressed cottage cheese - 2kg
- Caraway seeds - 1 tbsp
- Butter melted - 1/2 pound
- Salt - 1-2 tsp

Instructions:

- Add water to 7 L pot and bring to boil (helps prevent the milk from sticking).
- Add milk and bring to boil, mixing all the time to ensure it does not stick to the bottom.
- Crumble the cottage cheese and mix together with the caraway seeds.
- Add the cottage cheese mixture to the boiling milk.
- Continually stir the mixture. The milk will start separating into curds and whey and the liquid will turn greenish yellow in colour.
- When the mixture comes to a rolling boil again, boil for 5 minutes.
- Strain mixture through a sieve or strainer with small holes. Shake to get excess liquid out.
- Transfer the mixture back into the pot.
- Place pot on low heat and add eggs, melted butter and salt.
- Mix with a wooden spoon until it starts sticking together.
- Transfer to a mixing bowl with a dough hook attachment and mix at medium speed until ball forms, about 3 minutes.
- Transfer mixture onto a flat surface and cut into desired sized pieces. (I cut it into quarters and use round bottom soup bowls).
- Quickly place pieces into bowls and shape with hand into rounds. (As the cheese cools, it is harder to shape.)
- Cover each bowl and place in refrigerator to cool and ripen.
- Slice and serve!

Tips:

- Some recipes add sour cream or buttermilk to help the milk separate more easily.
- A lower temperature and shorter heating time will make the cheese softer and more crumbly.
- A higher temperature and longer heating time will make the cheese harder.
• “Jāņu” cheese is served with butter or honey and tastes best with beer!
• Cheese can be hung in a cheese cloth to harden and ripen.
• Instead of flavouring with caraway seeds, try dill, basil, cumin seeds, sundried tomatoes, peppers etc.