

Culture of Eating Milk 3: Butter

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Summary

The principal of butter making to separate fat from components of milk by cohesion through vigorous collision of fat droplets globally dispersed in milk. The methods applied to bring about such collision may be classified into three; swaying from side to side, vertical stirring and horizontal stirring to provide churning effects. The principles of these methods have not changed from ancient times but modern equipment for butter manufacture, allows greater quantities to be handled and with greater efficiency. The first descriptions in historical records of butter or similar products have been found in inland areas of Europe such as Thracia or Gallia rather than the actual Mediterranean as exemplified by Roman Italy or Greece. The reason could be that milk protein coagulation due to lactic acid fermentation occurs before the formation of a cream layer on the surface of the milk under warm climate conditions and the contour line for the geographical boundary for the two processes appears definable based on an average annual temperature of 15 degrees Celsius. Since butterfat has long been considered one of the most nutritious of foodstuffs for mankind, it is not surprising that it has been treated as a holy food. A typical example of holiness of butter concerns butter-oil lumps (DAIGO TOU) at Buddhist temples in Tibet and Bhutan, viewed as a symbolic expression of personal happiness and/or wellness in one's life.