

# The Essentialist

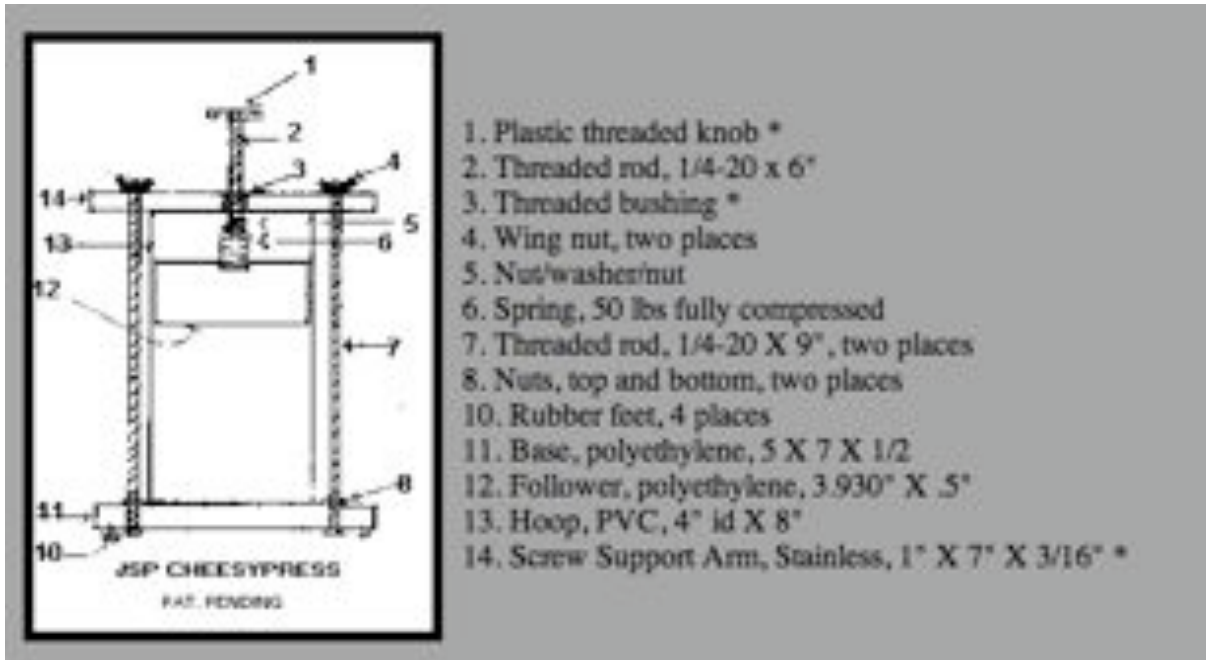
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Bigfork's Essential Stuff Newsletter -- Bringing People Together  
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## How to Make a Cheese Press

A press is used to press cheese curd tightly together, especially important to make a hard, waxed cheese. A press is basically a container with heavy weight applied. You can make one with an empty coffee can: cut out both ends and cut a wood follower to fit the opening. Small red bricks can be wrapped in foil and used for weights. (<http://www.i4at.org/countrylife/cheese.html>).

Here's a press you can buy, ready-to-assemble, at <http://schmidling.com/press.htm>, but as you can see, they provide instructions to make it for home use (allowed per the website, as long as you don't make them to sell, as they are protected by copyright).



This press is from the Justinsomnia blog  
(<http://justinsomnia.org/2009/02/how-to-build-a-cheese-press/>).

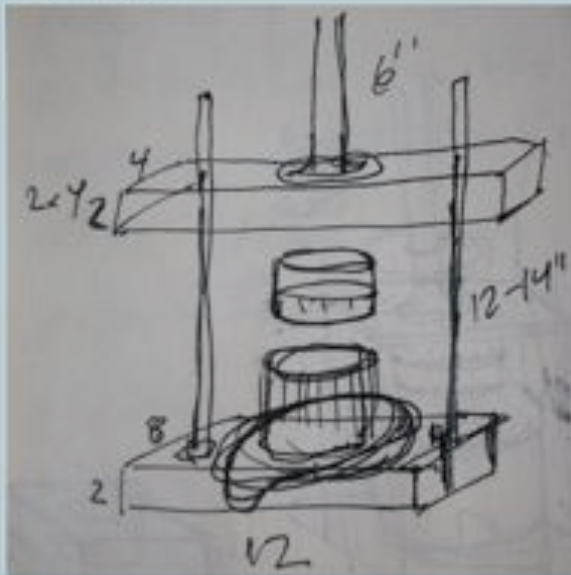
It's a rather simple construction, similar to the one above. However, his very first press was much more last-minute, and as he says, "rickety," as you can see (right):



## How to Make a Cheese Press

So he started sketching ideas, assembling the parts needed:

...but I immediately started drawing designs for a simple, inexpensive press.



Our plan was to get some weightlifting weights that we could put on the center pipe in the drawing. But then I realized, why not just skip the center pipe and put the weights on the left and right guide pipes? With that innovation in mind, we went to Home Depot looking for pipes, flanges, screws, wood, and a tray at the bottom to drain the whey away (presumably into the sink).

This is what we came back with:



- 16" length of 2x8"
- 18" length of 2x4"
- 1" spade bit
- 8 lbs weights (not all pictured)
- 2 threaded flanges
- 2 1/8" threaded pipes ("nipples")
- screws
- 2 rubber leg tips (not pictured)

Then began construction to create his finished product.

Drilling the holes for the guide pipes in the crossbar:



One of the mistakes we made was that our parts' tolerances were too tight. Turns out drilling a 1" diameter hole in wood does not allow a 1" diameter pipe to pass through. So I ended up having to increase the diameter with a Dremel tool. We had the same problem with the weights. They slid onto the pipes, but they were tight, which meant the pipe itself was absorbing most of the weight, rather than the crossbar, and thus the cheese curds. So we plan to return these weights in exchange for some "Olympic" style weights with larger holes.

In the meantime, here's the finished product:



And here's a sketch Fran made of her homemade press for cheese or tofu:

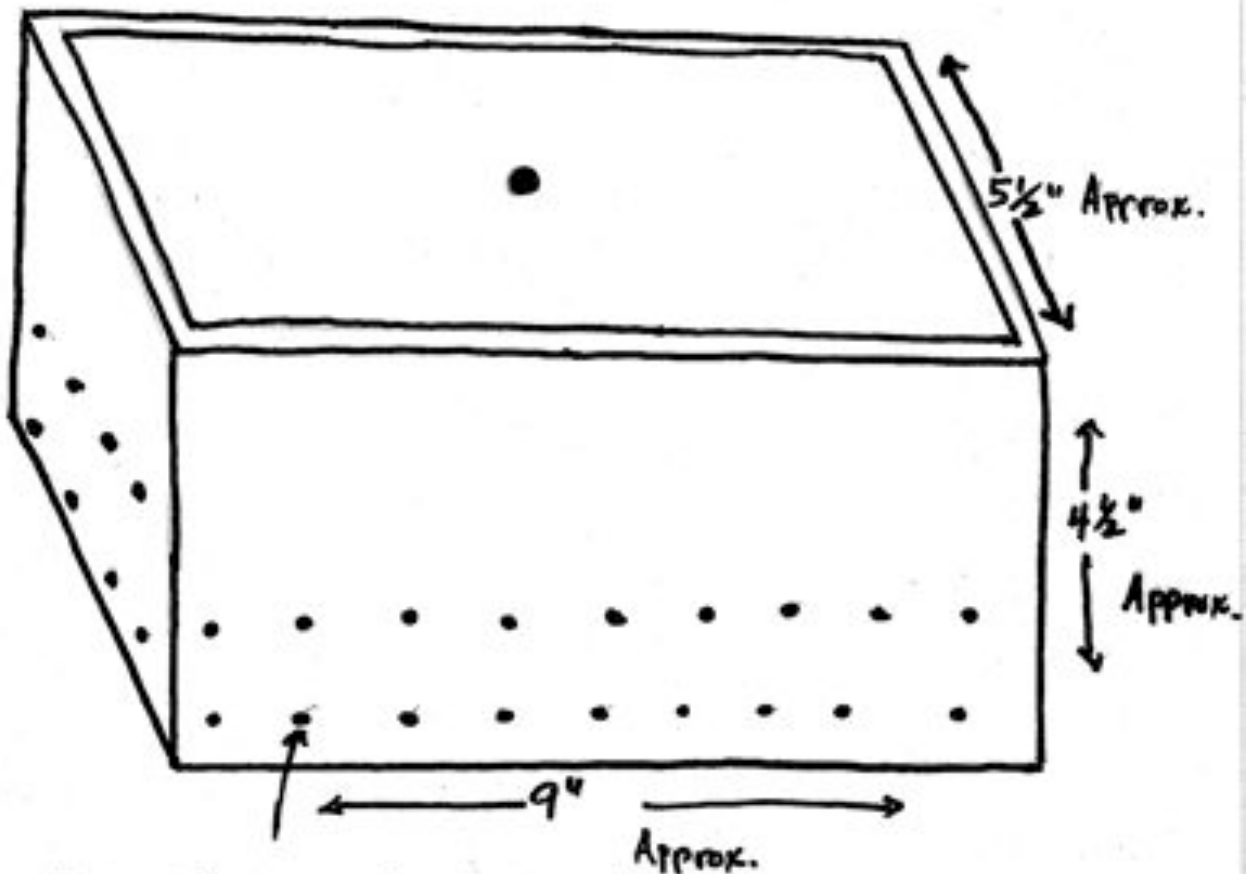
## Press for Cheese or Tofu

### Materials:

$\frac{3}{8}$ " pine - sufficient for sides, ends, top + bottom

$\frac{1}{4}$ " drill bit

Small knob for lid



Drill holes - double row 1" apart - for drainage  
in sides, ends and bottom