

SPREADABLE FRESH CHEESE**INGREDIENTS**

1 litre of milk (3.25%)
3 tbsp. of white vinegar or 3 tbsp. of lemon juice
1/4 tsp. of salt (or more, to taste)
Cheesecloth, clean cloth or sterile gauze

STEPS

Bring milk to near boiling point (80 °C).
As soon as it starts to boil, add vinegar (or lemon juice) and remove from heat.
Let stand for 15 minutes.
Place a colander in a bowl. Make sure the colander does not touch the bottom of the bowl and that there is enough space for the milk to drain.
Cover the bottom of the colander with cheesecloth, a clean cloth or sterile gauze and pour the mixture into the colander.
Let stand for 30 minutes to remove whey.
Transfer the mixture to a bowl, add salt and seasoning as desired.
Put back into the cheesecloth and form into a compact ball.
Place on a plate and let drain for 2 hours in the refrigerator.
Enjoy or store in an airtight container for 1 week in the refrigerator.

Boursin-type cheese**INGREDIENTS**

8 ounces cream cheese, room temperature
8 ounces of goat cheese
8 ounces butter, room temperature
3 tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese

STEPS

Beat all ingredients at medium speed until smooth.
Add seasoning as desired.
Refrigerate.

Fresh cheese**INGREDIENTS**

1 litre of milk (3.25%)
½ cup of cream (35%)
350 g of plain active yogurt
1/4 tsp. of salt (or more, to taste)

STEPS

Combine milk, cream and yogurt.
Mix well.
Heat the mixture over medium-low heat
Bring milk to near boiling point (80 to 85°C).
Stir constantly so that the milk does not stick.
As soon as the first bubbles appear, remove from heat.
Let stand for 15 minutes.
Place a colander in a bowl. Make sure the colander does not touch the bottom of the bowl and that there is enough space for the milk to drain.
Cover the bottom of the colander with cheesecloth, a clean cloth or sterile gauze and pour the mixture into the colander.
Let stand for 30 minutes to remove whey.
Transfer the mixture to a bowl, add salt and seasoning as desired.
Put back into the cheesecloth and form into a compact ball.
Place on a plate and let drain for 2 hours in the refrigerator.
Enjoy or store in an airtight container for 1 week in the refrigerator.

Note: Save the whey (drained liquid) for another use. It can be added to soups, bread or cake batters to replace liquids.

Seasoning

1) Garlic and chives

- 1 tbsp. chives, chopped
- 2 cloves of garlic, minced
- 1/4 tsp. black pepper, ground

2) Garlic and herbs 1

- 1 tbsp. chives, chopped
- 2 cloves of garlic, minced
- 1 tsp. fresh thyme, chopped
- 1 tsp. fresh oregano
- 1/4 tsp. black pepper, ground

3) Herbs 2

- 2 cloves of garlic, minced
- 2 tbsp. finely chopped parsley
- 1 tsp. finely chopped dill
- 1 tsp. finely chopped basil
- 1/2 tsp. finely chopped chives
- 1/4 tsp. finely chopped thyme
- 1/4 tsp. dried marjoram
- 1/4 tsp. black pepper, ground

Note: Seasoning can be salty or sweet. Let your imagination run wild!

True ricotta is made with whey recovered from other cheese productions (pecorino, parmesan, etc.) which is then re-cooked (hence the name "ricotta", for "re-cooked") to flocculate and bring up the remaining particles in the famous liquid. It takes about 10L of whey to make 200 to 300g of ricotta, depending on the whey used.

Ricotta type fresh cheese

INGREDIENTS

3 ½ cups of 3.25% milk
½ cup of 35% cream
¼ cup white vinegar
½ tsp. salt

STEPS

Place a square of cheesecloth in a sieve and place on a bowl. Set aside.

In a bowl or glass cup, combine the milk and cream and heat in the microwave for 3 to 4 minutes so that it is hot but not boiling.

(It is possible to make the ricotta in a pot by heating the milk and the cream between 80 °C and 85 °C)

Add vinegar and salt and stir to separate the liquid and create a lumpy texture. Let stand without stirring for 20 to 30 minutes.

Using a slotted spoon, gently transfer to cheesecloth and let drain for 20 minutes to 2 hours (or overnight), depending on desired texture or use.

Ricotta type fresh cheese

INGREDIENTS

2 litres of 3.25% milk
2 cups of buttermilk
1 cup of heavy cream (15% or 35%)
Salt

STEPS

In a large saucepan, heat milk, buttermilk and cream over medium heat until a thermometer reads approximately 85°C (185°F). Reduce heat to minimum to maintain temperature between 78°C and 85°C (mixture must not boil or clot will break down). Let stand on the heat, without stirring, until a whitish clot forms on the surface, about 30 minutes. A yellowish whey will form under the clot.

Line the inside of a colander with one to three layers of cheesecloth. Pour the curd into the colander and let drain for 30 to 45 minutes. Transfer to a bowl. Add salt to taste, if desired.

The longer the draining time, the drier the ricotta.

Mascarpone type fresh cheese

INGREDIENTS

2 cups of 35% pasteurized whipping cream
1 tbsp. lemon juice

STEPS

- 1) Pour the cream into a heatproof bowl and heat in a double boiler (boiling water) for about 15 minutes until it reaches a temperature of 85°C (190°F).
- 2) Once the temperature is reached, pour in the lemon juice and stir the mixture with a whisk, keeping it at that temperature (85°C/190°F) for 5 minutes. The cream should thicken (like a custard) and coat the sides of the bowl.
- 3) Remove the bowl from the water bath and let it cool to room temperature.
- 4) When the bowl is cold, put it in the refrigerator for 12 hours.
- 5) After 12 hours, the cream should have thickened even more.
- 6) Line a colander with 3 layers of cheesecloth and place over a bowl. Pour in the mixture and let it sit for another 12 hours without pressing it. After 12 hours, the mascarpone is normally ready, but the more the mixture drips and refrigerates, the firmer the mascarpone.

Labneh type fresh cheese

(Lebanese fresh cheese)

INGREDIENTS

2 cups of plain yogurt
1 pinch of salt

STEPS

- 1) Mix yogurt and salt
- 2) Line a colander with 3 layers of cheesecloth and place over a bowl. Pour in the mixture and let it sit for 12 hours.
- 3) To serve, spread the Labneh on a plate, drizzle with olive oil, sprinkle with thyme and serve with pita bread, olives and/or cucumber slices.

The art of mozzarella is to find a balance when heating the curd so that it becomes warm enough to become shiny and form a solid structure

Fresh Mozzarella

INGREDIENTS

1 ½ tsp. citric acid
¼ of a renin tablet (cut one tablet into 4)
1 ½ cups of distilled water
4 litres of milk

STEPS

Add citric acid to 1 cup of water and mix well
Put the milk in a large pot
Pour the water and citric acid mixture into the milk
Heat slowly to reach a temperature of 32°C (90°F) stirring gently just to prevent the milk from sticking to the bottom of the pot.
When the temperature is reached, remove the pot from the fire
Dissolve renin in ¼ cup of cold distilled water.
Add the dissolved renin to the hot milk. Stir for about 30 seconds. (Do not over stir.)
Let stand for 20-30 minutes. (The curd is ready when a knife leaves its mark in it.)
Cut the curd into squares of about 2 cm. Make sure the knife touches the bottom of the pot.
Return the pot to the heat and bring to 42°C (105°F) while stirring gently.
When the temperature is reached, remove from heat and with a slotted spoon remove the curd.
Place it in a cheesecloth-lined colander.
Drain well, press to form a solid mass.

To shape the mozzarella, use one of the 2 methods below:

1. Microwave

In a heatproof bowl, pour the remaining whey and curds and heat at maximum temperature for 1 minute.

Pick up the curd and knead it to distribute the heat.

CAUTION: the curd will be very hot. Wear heat-resistant gloves or soak your hands in cold water before handling the curd.

Repeat heating and kneading steps. Heat for periods of 30 seconds.

(If the curd tears, it is too cold). Kneading will make the cheese firmer and shinier.

Over-kneading will result in a rubbery cheese.

The trick is to use the heat as quickly as possible to get the ball shape.

2. Stove

Heat leftover whey to 82°C (185°F).

Place a reasonably sized section of curd on a slotted spoon and submerge the curd in the pot for 1 minute. Wear heat-resistant gloves or immerse your hands in cold tap water and then pick up the curd. The curd will be hot. Knead it gently at first.
Repeat the heating and kneading steps.
Heat for 30-second periods.
Form the curd into a ball.

Keep the cheese balls in the whey.
Add 1-2 tbsp of salt to the whey to give the cheese a salty taste.