

Quick and Easy Junket Mozzarella Cheese

1 gallon milk (whole milk for a richer flavor or skimmed milk for low calorie cheese)

1 1/4 teaspoon citric acid powder (from local pharmacy) dissolved in 1/2 cup cool water

1/2 tablet "JUNKET" rennet tablet suspended in 1/4 cup cool water

EQUIPMENT

1. 5 quart covered stainless pot with heavy bottom (or 5 quart covered enamel pot over boiling water in a small skillet as a double boiler)
2. 1 cup Pyrex measuring cup
3. 2 cup Pyrex measuring cup
4. Thermometer, -20 C to 110 C (20 F to 220 F)
5. long bladed knife
6. sterile handkerchief or non-terrycloth dish towel or cheese cloth
7. 8 inch strainer
8. receiving container to catch draining whey (a large bowl)
9. 1000 watt microwave oven

PROCEDURE

1. Warm milk over gentle heat to 88F (31C), take care not to scorch.
2. Dissolve 1 1/4 tsp. citric acid powder in 1/2 cup cool water. Add to 88°F milk, stir well.
3. Dissolve 1/2 tablet Junket Rennet into 1/4 cup cool water. Stir thoroughly into warmed milk mixture. Let set undisturbed for 1-2 hours, until a clean break is achieved (see basic cheese recipe for description).
4. Cut curd into 1/2 inch cubes (see basic cheese recipe for technique).
5. Warm the curds and whey over low heat, stirring gently to warm evenly and keep the curds separated until temperature reaches 42 C (108 F). Hold at 42 C (108°F) for 35 minutes, stirring every five minutes to keep curds separated and off the bottom.
6. Collect curds by pouring curds and whey through a fine cloth held in an 8 inch sieve over a 1 gallon container, let drain for 15 minutes. Save the whey to make ricotta if you wish (see below).
7. Break up curd, mix in 1 teaspoon salt thoroughly.
8. Place 1 cup of the salted curd into 2 cup measure.
9. Microwave on high (1000 watts) for 45 seconds (for other wattage ovens, adjust the time so that you get the desired elasticity).
10. Separate hot curd from container with the back of a fork, knead with hands to distribute heat evenly. Heat again for 20 more seconds. Stretch and fold to make smooth and elastic, shape into a soft ball.
11. Drop into cold, salted water (1/3rd cup salt per quart), let sit in refrigerator for a day, store in air tight container. Rinse salt off with water and use within a week or so or freeze.

Ricotta Cheese

Whey left from turning a gallon of milk into cheese

This will make about 6-8 ounces of ricotta (almost a cup)

Italians name this cheese ricotta because it is made from "recooked" whey, a byproduct of preparing basic cheese. It can be used fresh or frozen until needed.

EQUIPMENT:

1. 5 quart pot with lid. Heavy stainless is best, but a light enameled pot can be used if you stir continuously during heating, or heat over boiling water. (Avoid aluminum which can dissolve in the acid.)
2. Wooden spoon, to stir the whey while heating (a long handled spatula works too)
3. Thermometer (32-220 °F or 0-110 °C) to monitor temperature of whey
4. Receiving container, to catch draining whey (a clean plastic bucket will do)
5. 1 quart bowl, to receive dipped curds
6. A fine meshed strainer, to dip out floating curd.
7. Large strainer, to suspend over receiving pot
8. Fine weave cloth, a boiled handkerchief or a non-terry cloth dish towel to drain ricotta

SUPPLIES:

- Whey left from turning a gallon of milk into cheese.
- This will make about 6-8 ounces of ricotta (almost a cup)

PROTOCOL:

1. Place the whey left over from making basic cheese in a non-reactive pot. Cover and let sit overnight (12 to 24 hours) at room temperature to develop sufficient acidity.
2. The next day, heat the acidified whey over a moderate fire with stirring (do not let it stick or burn) until its temperature is near boiling (200°F or 95 °C). Do not let boil over.
3. Remove from heat. Cover and allow the "cooked" whey to cool undisturbed until it is comfortable to the touch (several hours).
4. **DO NOT STIR UP THE CURD.** Gently scoop out most of the fine, delicate curds with the fine strainer and place in a bowl.
5. Set up a receiving container with a large strainer lined with a fine clean cloth. Pour the remaining whey through the cloth (it filters slowly). After most of the whey has drained through, add the curds and let continue to drain.
6. Allow the whey to drain out for 1-2 hours. Then pick up the corners of the cloth, suspend like a bag over a sink to allow the last of the whey to drain out of the ricotta. This will take several hours. It can be done in the refrigerator overnight.
7. Remove the drained ricotta from the cloth, pack into a container, cover and store in the refrigerator. Use it soon after making. Alternatively, ricotta will freeze very well.