

Fresh Ricotta Style Cheese

1 gallon Homogenized milk (not the super pasteurized long life kind)
1 tsp citric acid OR 3-4 T fresh lemon juice OR 1-3 T vinegar (we use white wine vinegar)
1 tsp salt

- 1.) Pour milk into a non reactive pot : glass, ceramic, stainless steel. DO NOT USE ALUMINUM. Add citric acid or lemon juice and salt and stir well.
- 2.) Heat milk to 195 degrees F, stirring often to avoid scorching. Use a thermometer to check the temperature.
- 3.) As soon as the curds and whey separate, take the pan off the heat and let it set for ten minutes undisturbed. If the curds do not separate, add lemon juice (or vinegar) by the tablespoon, stirring after each addition and allowing 60 seconds or so for additional clabbering to occur before adding more lemon juice. When it is done you will have white curds and a clearish yellow/green liquid.
- 4.) Line a colander with a scalded butter muslin or a large section of a well washed and scalded white cotton t shirt or flour sack style dish towel. Ladle the hot curds and whey carefully into the colander. Sprinkle salt on the curds in the cloth while in the colander, check for flavour
- 5.) Tie the ends up into a bag with a string and let hang for one hour

This will produce a soft cheese like ricotta. Draining the curds longer will yield a somewhat firmer cheese, but still suitable for spreading, use in lasagna or calzones or in a cheesecake.

Fresh Cheese Spreads

For an herbed cheese spread, add chopped chives and additional salt to taste, to the drained curd, mix well and refrigerate overnight before serving. Other fresh herbs such as sage or basil or finely chopped green onions also work well -- use by availability and add to your preferences.

A Bag Cheese

Fresh uncured cheese may be simply made . Fresh cheese was even more simply made in period or today by those with access to milk straight from the cow or nanny goat. To make fresh cheese curds, you had only to filter the milk into a scalded bucket, cover with a freshly scalded cloth and let sit in a warm 95-100 degree place until the milk clabbered. The curds were then ladled into a butter muslin lined colander and allowed to drain. Salt, if desired, could then be mixed with the curds. The ends of the muslin were then gathered up and tied together with a string and hung up to drain for eight hours or overnight. The ball of curds could then be processed in many ways, beginning with pressing the cheese or eaten as is.

For those whose milk comes pre-pasteurized in the bag, carton or jug, alternate methods of clabbering rather than naturally occurring lactobaccillus bacteria are required. As it is the lactic acid produced by the bacteria that assist clabbering, other means of acidification of the milk can be used. An easy and reliable method to clabber milk from the grocery store is to use an acid. Vinegar, lemon juice, ascorbic acid or citric acid may be used.