

Mozzarella

Ingredients

4 litres | 1 gal milk: fresh, whole (3-4%)

2 tbsp cooled, boiled water

1 tsp salt

2 tsp citric acid

½ tsp | 2.5ml calf rennet*

* You can also use vegetable or microbial rennet but check the instructions on the label of your particular rennet as it may be a different amount to add to 4 litres of milk.

Method

1. Stir the citric acid into the milk for 30 seconds, then warm the milk in a bain-marie to 31°C (88°F) over 5 minutes.
2. Dissolve the rennet in 1 tbsp of cooled, boiled water, add to the milk and stir for 30 seconds, then warm the milk over 5 minutes until it reaches 41°C (106°F).
3. Remove from the heat and leave on the kitchen bench, covered with a sanitised cloth or pot lid for 20 minutes. The curds and whey will separate over this time.
4. Drain the curds in a sanitised, cheesecloth-lined colander. Leave for 5 minutes until most of the whey has drained off.
5. Place the curds in a large microwave-safe bowl. Heat on high for 1 minute or until it is just beginning to melt.
6. Put on sanitised protective rubber gloves. Take the bowl out of the microwave, squeeze the curds and tip off any whey until it stops dripping. Put back into the microwave for 20 seconds or so (it will depend on your microwave) on high until it all melts together and looks like thick custard.
7. Remove from the microwave, sprinkle over the salt, and begin kneading the curd, folding it over and over.

Note: it will be very hot.

Use your hands or a sanitised wooden spoon to stretch it out, then roll it into a ball and repeat for 30 seconds to 1 minute until it is the consistency of chewed gum. The curd must be really hot while you do this or it will not stretch. If it gets cold, put it back in the microwave until it melts again (20 seconds or so).

8. Shape handfuls into balls and place into ice water to go cold. Once cold, remove from the water and store in a container in a little bit of sterilised water, or a 10% brine (370g plain salt to 4 litres of cooled (12°C) boiled water), or you can vacuum pack it. You can use this cheese immediately, or store it for up to 5 days.

What to do if you don't have a microwave

There is a second option for finishing this cheese if you don't have a microwave or don't want to use one. When you get to Step 5, heat a pot of water to 80°C (176°F) and place spoonfuls of curd into the hot water. Wear rubber gloves, and repeat Steps 6-9.

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