

FRESH MOZZARELLA CHEESE

Recipe taken/adapted from

<https://fromscratchfarmstead.com/how-to-make-quick-and-natural-mozzarella-cheese-with-vinegar/>

****See their website for photos and tips!****

Time needed: 30-40 minutes

Tools Needed:

- 5 Qt. (or larger) stainless steel cooking pot
- Cooking thermometer
- Wooden cooking spoon
- Long sharp knife
- Bandana-sized piece of cheesecloth/cotton muslin
- Colander or other strainer

Ingredients:

- 1 gallon raw milk (unpasteurized)
- ½ cup apple cider vinegar mixed with 1 ½ cups cold water
- ½ or ¾ tablet rennet, such as Junket rennet (*use as much or a little more than suggested by the rennet box for your amount of milk. I use ¾ tablet.)
- 3 tsp salt, plus extra to add to cheese for taste

Directions:

1. Pour *cold* milk into cooking pot. Pour in diluted vinegar and stir briskly for a minute.
2. Warm up milk slowly to 90 deg F over medium-low heat. Stir regularly and heat slowly to prevent curdling.
3. While milk is warming, dissolve rennet into ¼ cup unchlorinated water per gallon of milk.
4. At 90 deg F, remove milk from heat and pour in dissolved rennet. Stir immediately and thoroughly for 1 minute. Place cover on pot and put a dishtowel over lid to maintain 90.
Let sit undisturbed 15-30 min (I need 20 min) until the milk is thick like pudding and makes a clean break when sliced.
5. Use the sharp knife to slice curd into cubes within the pot. Stir with wooden spoon for 5-15 min to release whey. Spread cheesecloth over inside of colander & spoon curds/whey into the colander. Drain for 15-30 minutes.
6. Fill a small mixing bowl with cold water and the 3 tsp of salt. Set aside.

****At this point in the process, the "From Scratch Farmstead" uses a water bath on the stove to heat the curds. I prefer the microwave method described below. Feel free to try both & see which method you like!****

Heating curds in Microwave:

7. Cut the ball of drained curds into four sections. Put one portion of curds into a microwave-safe bowl and heat for 20-30 seconds. Some more whey will drain off cheese and the portion of curds should be hot and stretch easily (if not, microwave again for 10-15 seconds.) **Be careful not to burn your hands!** You may want to use clean rubber gloves when handling the hot cheese.

8. Lightly sprinkle the top of hot cheese with some salt. Fold cheese over on itself and then stretch like a rubber band. Fold and stretch several times.
9. Microwave for another 20 seconds and this time stretch cheese then roll/tuck it up into a ball. Place cheese ball into cold salt-water for a minute to cool down. Remove cheese from salt water, drain and refrigerate.
10. Enjoy your fresh cheese within a few days! Can freeze cheese for later.