

## 30-Minute Mozzarella

Makes about  $\frac{3}{4}$  pound of cheese. Takes about 30 minutes to make.

### Ingredients:

- 1 teaspoon cheese salt (optional)
- One gallon of cow or goat milk
- $1\frac{1}{4}$  cup cool, chlorine-free water
- $1\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon citric acid
- $\frac{1}{4}$  rennet tablet or  $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon liquid rennet
- Large bowl of water, placed in the refrigerator when you start
- Large bowl of water, placed in the freezer when you start



### Supplies

- A pot big enough to hold one gallon of milk
- Thermometer
- Colander
- Slotted spoon (not plastic)
- Long knife
- Microwaveable bowl (if you're using a microwave to stretch the curd)
- Small pot (if you're using a stovetop/waterbath method to stretch the curd)
- Rubber gloves (optional)

### Instructions

1. If using a rennet tablet, dissolve  $\frac{1}{4}$  rennet tablet in  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup water. Wrap the rest of the tablet in plastic and store it in the freezer. If using liquid rennet, dilute the rennet in  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of water.
2. Mix  $1\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoons citric acid into 1 cup water and stir until the citric acid is dissolved. Pour this into the big pot.
3. Pour 1 gallon of milk into the pot and stir vigorously with the slotted spoon, while heating the milk.
  - If using raw milk, heat it to 88°F.
  - If using pasteurized milk, heat it to 90°F.
4. Take the pot off the burner. Add the rennet and slowly stir it in with an up-and-down motion of the slotted spoon for approximately 30 seconds.
5. Cover the pot and let it sit undisturbed for 5 minutes. If you're using raw milk, let it sit for 10 minutes. Check the curd at this point. It should look like custard, with a clear separation between the curd (solid) and the whey (liquid). If the curd is too soft or the whey is too milky, let it sit for a few more minutes.
6. Cut the curd with a knife that reaches to the bottom of the pot. Put the pot back on the stove and slowly heat it up while stirring the curds around with the slotted spoon.
  - If using raw milk, heat it to 90°F.
  - If using pasteurized milk, and you're going to use the microwave to stretch the curds, heat it to 105°F.
  - If using pasteurized milk, and you're going to use the stovetop to stretch the

curds, heat it to 110°F.)

7. Take the pot off the burner and stir slowly for 2 to 5 minutes. More stirring will make a firmer cheese.
8. Pour off the floating whey.\*
9. Stretch the curds using one of the two methods below.
10. Form the cheese. You can make the stretched curd into a large ball, or a collection of small balls. You can braid it, or make it into a log, or roll it into a number of sticks. Be creative!
11. Cool the cheese by submerging it in the bowl of refrigerated water. Leave it there for 15 minutes, then put it in the bowl of ice water. This cooling step is important to keep the cheese from becoming grainy.

### **USING A MICROWAVE TO STRETCH THE CURDS**

1. Ladle the curds into a large microwaveable bowl and drain off the whey. Use rubber gloves if you like. Don't press too much.
2. Microwave for one minute, then fold the curds gently into the center of the bowl, draining off more whey. Add 1 teaspoon salt (optional).
3. Microwave for another 30 seconds. The curd should be 160° to 170°F now. If it isn't, microwave it for another 30 seconds.
4. Stretch the curd by pulling it like taffy until it is soft and shiny. The more you work the cheese, the firmer it will be.

### **USING THE STOVETOP (WATERBATH) TO STRETCH THE CURDS** (You can do this with half the curds at a time.)

- Heat a pot of water to 185°F.
- Ladle the curds into a colander, folding them together gently toward the center and draining off the whey as you go.
- Dip the colander with the curds in it carefully into the hot water a few times, then use the slotted spoon to fold the curds back into the center of the colander until they become stretchy. This will happen when the curds reach 160° to 170°F.
- Remove the curd from the colander and stretch it like taffy. If it does not stretch easily, return it to the hot water bath.
- At this point you can add cheese salt, if you like. Then stretch the curd by pulling it like taffy until it is soft and shiny. The more you work the cheese, the firmer it will be.