

Valley
MILKHOUSE

Ricotta



This fresh and simple cheese is a great starting point for beginning cheesemakers. No need for cultures and fancy forms. Apple cider vinegar, cheesecloth, and the best milk you can find are all that's needed to make ricotta at home.

Ingredients

1 gallon of raw or pasteurized whole milk (cannot be ultra pasteurized)
2-3 cups apple cider or white distilled vinegar
Non-iodized salt

Sanitization

Wash and pre-sanitize all surfaces and materials including pots, utensils and cheesecloth by dipping into a diluted bleach solution for 30 seconds. The bleach solution is made up of 2-3 teaspoons of regular strength bleach mixed with 1 gallon of water.

Process

I. Warming the milk

- Warm milk to 185 degrees F slowly over direct stovetop heat. Use a stainless steel pot with a heavy bottom and stir continuously so as not to scald the milk. This could take 30-45 minutes.

II. Coagulating the milk

- Once the milk reaches 185 F, begin adding vinegar to coagulate the milk. Add a half-cup of vinegar at a time and stir continuously through this process. Once you see that the curd is beginning to separate from the whey, cease adding vinegar, stop stirring and allow the curd to form at the surface.

III. Curd Formation

- Allow the curds to collect at the surface. Do not stir through this process. This should take about 15 minutes.

IV. Hooping the curds

- Place a sanitized drain cloth such as a cheesecloth or muslin over a colander. Using a slotted spoon or ladle, gently scoop the curd into the cloth.
- Tie the cloth and hang it in a place where it can drain for several hours.

V. Draining

- At this point, the amount of draining is in your hands depending on the desired texture of the cheese. If you prefer a softer, creamier ricotta, you may only need to drain the curd for an hour before it is ready to eat. For a crumblier version, or a basket cheese that is sliceable, drain overnight and add salt to taste.

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