

Make Your Own Mozzarella

Homemade Mozzarella from Scratch



1. Gather the equipment. Beyond kitchen basics like cutting boards, knives, and towels, here's what you'll need:

- a large (6- to 8-quart) stainless steel pot
- an instant-read thermometer
- 2 large spoons
- a large slotted spoon
- a fine mesh strainer
- 2 large glass or stainless steel bowls
- thick rubber gloves (dishwashing gloves work fine)
- 1 gallon fresh whole milk (not ultrapasteurized; preferably raw)
- 1 1/2 teaspoons citric acid dissolved in 1/4 cup cold distilled water
- 1/4 teaspoon liquid vegetable rennet dissolved in 5 teaspoons cold distilled water OR 1/2 tablet vegetable rennet dissolved in 1/4 cup cold distilled water
- 2 tablespoons kosher salt



2. Place the milk in the stainless steel pot and bring it to 55 degrees Fahrenheit over medium heat. When the milk reaches the proper temperature, stir in the citric acid mixture.



3. Continue to cook the milk until it reaches 88 degrees Fahrenheit, about 5 minutes (at about 70 degrees Fahrenheit, the milk will begin to curdle). Add the rennet mixture, and stir with a slotted spoon until it just starts to separate, about 30 seconds.



4. Continue cooking the milk until it reaches 100 to 105 degrees Fahrenheit. Turn off the heat and leave the pot undisturbed until curds begin to form and pull away from the sides, about 5 to 10 minutes. (The curds should look like thick yogurt, and the whey should be nearly clear. If the whey is still milky, wait a few more minutes until it clears.)

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5. Use the slotted spoon to scoop the curds into a fine mesh strainer set over the first bowl. Reserve the whey in the pot.



6. Press gently on the curds with the slotted spoon until almost, but not all, of the excess whey has drained into the bowl. The curds should still be dripping. (Don't let all the whey drain off, or you'll end up with tough curds.) Discard the excess whey.



7. Place the curds on a cutting board and slice them into thin strips. Place the slices in the empty first bowl; set aside. Fill the second bowl halfway with cold water; set aside.



8. Combine 4 cups of the reserved whey (you can discard any remaining whey) and the salt in a large saucepan, place over high heat, and bring to 180 degrees Fahrenheit.



9. When the whey mixture is ready, pour it over the curds. (The curds should be just covered.)



10. Keeping the curds submerged, use two large spoons to press them together until they form a solid mass, about 1 minute.

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11. While wearing gloves, remove the now-solid curd from the bowl, and reserve the whey mixture.



12. Holding one end of the curd in each hand, pull on it (as if making taffy) until it forms a cord about 12 to 18 inches long. Fold the curd back on itself and continue to stretch and fold it until it's shiny and small blisters have appeared on the surface, about 30 to 45 seconds. (If you stretch the curd too much, your cheese will be tough. If necessary, the curd can be dipped in the whey mixture to make it more malleable.) Form the curd into a ball and place it back in the whey mixture.



13. To form the mozzarella, pinch the curd between your thumb and forefinger to shape a two-inch piece, then tuck the ends under to make a uniform ball. Place the mozzarella ball in the bowl of cold water, and repeat the process until all of the curd has been formed into balls.



14. Refrigerate the mozzarella, submerged in water, in an airtight container. Use within three days.