

Whole Milk Ricotta

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Ricotta is normally made from the whey left over from rennet based cheesemaking. However, you can also make it using whole milk, and the cheese yield will be much higher. This is because whey from cheesemaking no longer has the casein proteins that became part of the produced cheese. This cheese may be one of the easiest cheeses to make, requiring only milk, vinegar, salt and basic equipment you probably already have in your kitchen.

Ricotta can be used to make lasagna, and other Italian dishes. Search the web for "baked ricotta" for a intriguing recipe that simply has you bake ricotta in the oven and serve it whole as you would any other type protein.

This recipe was adapted from a version found on the home cheesemaking website cheeseforum.org.

Equipment:

One non-reactive stockpot large enough to contain the amount of milk with which you are working (1-2 gallons equals 4-8 quarts).

Slotted spoon or ladle.

Kitchen thermometer.

Cheesecloth.

Colander or kitchen sieve.

Ingredients

1 gallon of whole milk.

1 teaspoon pickling salt or 1 1/4 teaspoons kosher salt.

1/2 cup distilled white vinegar (plus up to 1/4 cup more, if needed)

Method

Heat the milk to 185° F slowly over a medium burner. Stir slowly to prevent scorching. Maintain temperature by turning burner on and off as required.

Add salt to the milk, stir to dissolve.

Slowly add 1/2 cup of vinegar. Stir to combine. After 2-3 minutes you should start to see curds and translucent whey forming. If you do not, add up to 1/4 cup additional vinegar, stirring.

Wait about 15 minutes for curds to form.

Ladle curds into a colander or kitchen sieve lined with cheesecloth. If using store bought cheesecloth, you may need to use double or triple layers.

Let drain for 1 to 4 hours or until whey has stopped draining.

Invert the colander onto a plate and place cheese in fridge.

Leave cheese in fridge overnight or up to 10 days to firm up. The cheese will get firmer the longer you leave it.