

Mozzarella cheese

Equipment: Measuring cups and spoons 2 Small bowl Slotted spoon Metal spoon Large pot Colander Bowl for colander to sit over. New chux cloth for straining cheese	Ingredients: 4L fresh milk 1 ½ teaspoons citric acid. 250 ml water to dissolve the citric acid. 5 vegetable rennet tablets 60 ml water to dissolve the rennet. Pinch flaky salt
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What to do:

Stage 1 – Prepare the milk.

1. In a small bowl, mix the citric acid and 250ml water and stir until dissolved.
2. In a separate small bowl, mix the rennet and 60ml water and stir well until dissolved.
3. Pour the milk into a large pot and **add the citric acid mix**. Warm the mixture over medium heat and stir slowly but constantly until the milk reaches 32°C. Remove from the heat as soon as you reach the required temperature.
4. Add the rennet mixture to the warm milk and stir **2 times slowly** to mix well. Then cover the pot and set aside for 5 minutes.
5. The milk should have 'set' and be a consistency like a thick yogurt that you can slice through. If you can cut through it nicely in a straight line, you can move to the next step. If not, set aside for another 5 minutes and try again.

Stage 2 – Prepare the curds.

6. Cut the curds. Create a grid pattern through the curds, first slicing one way at 3cm intervals, then the other at 3cm intervals. Cut deep into the curd, touch the bottom of the pot.
7. Heat the curds over medium heat and stir **very slowly and gently** but constantly. **Do not** break the curds. The liquid needs to reach 41°C.
8. Remove the pot from the heat as soon as it reaches 41°C. Continue to **stir slowly**, for another 5 minutes. The curds will begin to separate from the whey.
9. Scoop the cheese curds from the pot with a slotted spoon, into a large colander lined with a cloth, allow the curds to drain into a bowl for around 5 minutes.
10. Use the whey for the next step.

Stage 3 – Shaping the mozzarella.

11. **Divide the curds into ¼.** Heat the whey liquid to **76°C** and place the 4 pieces of curd in the pot.
12. Keep the curds in the hot liquid for a few minutes. This is when the mozzarella is taking shape – the curds should become stretchy and look a little like melted cheese.
13. Remove from the hot whey, sprinkle a little salt on the curds then, using gloves, stretch and fold the curds onto themselves.
14. Repeat until they become shiny and firm, between 3-5 turns is enough. Then roll into balls and quickly cool them.
15. If it's hard to shape into a ball or comes apart while stretching, place back in the hot liquid and allow to heat up a little more to shape into the final, smooth ball. You can also make small mozzarella balls (bocconcini).