

ANIMAL, VEGETABLE, MIRACLE

A Year of Food Life

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30-MINUTE MOZZARELLA

Thanks to Ricki Carroll, *Home Cheese Making*

Measure out additives before you start, in clean glass or ceramic cups. Use unchlorinated water.

1 gallon pasteurized milk (NOT ultra-pasteurized)

1 1/2 level tsp. citric acid dissolved in 1/4 cup cool water

Stir the milk on the stove in a stainless steel kettle, heating very gently. At 55° add the citric acid solution and mix thoroughly. At 88° it should begin to curdle.

1/4 tsp. liquid rennet diluted in 1/4 cup cool water

Gently stir in diluted rennet with up-and-down motion, and continue heating the milk to just over 100°, then turn off heat. Curds should be pulling away from sides of pot, ready to scoop out. The whey should be clear. (If it's still milky, wait a few minutes.) Use a slotted spoon to move curds from pot to a 2 quart microwaveable bowl. Press curds gently with hands to remove as much whey as possible. Microwave the curds on high for one minute, then knead the cheese again with hands or a spoon to remove more whey. (Rubber gloves help – this gets hot!) Microwave two more times (about 35 seconds each) kneading between each heating. At this point, salt the cheese to taste, then knead and pull until it's smooth and elastic. When you can stretch it into ropes like taffy you are done. If the curds break instead, they need to be reheated a bit. Once cheese is smooth and shiny, roll it into small balls to eat warm or store for later in the refrigerator.

Lacking a microwave, you can use the pot of hot whey on the stove for the heating-and-kneading steps. Put the ball of curd back in with a big slotted spoon, and heat it until it's almost too hot to touch. Good stretching temperature is 175 degrees.

