



UDDERLY CULTURED THE ART OF MILK FERMENTATION

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Also called bianca cheese or basket cheese, fresh mozzarella is a solid white uncured cheese, excellent for melting or seasoning. It's a favorite for both Pizza Margharita and Isle of Capri Salad (basil, tomato, and fresh mozzarella). See recipes in Part II, Chapter Two on page 43 and 46, respectively.

Please note—this fresh cheese is not like the wrapped and dried ball of mozzarella that you buy at the supermarket for grating. This is the kind of fresh mozzarella you find in the specialty cheese section, stored in a container of whey water, usually in the form of little balls. If you desire dried mozzarella, you'll need to follow a different procedure that heats, stretches, and further processes the fresh cheese. Our recipe for dried mozzarella is included below.



FRESH MOZZARELLA

Ingredients

- 1/2 gallon raw milk
- 1/2 cup white vinegar, or the strained juice of 2 large lemons

Instructions

1. Place the raw milk in a stainless steel pot, and heat it to 110°F (don't let the temperature rise higher than 112°F). Immediately turn off heat.
2. Add 1/2 cup white vinegar or the strained juice of 2 large lemons. Using a back and forth motion, stir the milk with a spatula or large nonslotted spoon until large curds form. Keep stirring until the curds and whey separate.
3. Pour the whole mass into a cheesecloth-lined colander or sieve suspended over a large bowl. Hang until the whey has stopped dripping, about one hour. Squeeze the cloth gently. If you wrapped the cheesecloth tightly, you will now have about a 1/2 pound of round, white, semisoft cheese.

You have two choices for storage options. If you leave the cheese in a bowl in your refrigerator uncovered, it will develop a light skin. After a day, turn the cheese so the other side also develops a skin. This dries the cheese, which gives it a three-day shelf life. You may also cube it and cover it in seasoned oil, where it will last for about three weeks. (See my recipe for Fresh Mozzarella in Olive Oil and Herbs in Part II, Chapter Two of Udderly Cultured, on page 45.)

The other storage option is to submerge the cheese in a deep bowl of whey, so no skin develops. This will give it a shelf life of about three days. You'll want to store your cheese depending on what recipe you've chosen—both are called for in the recipe section in Part II, Chapter Two of Udderly Cultured, on page 41.



Heating the raw milk.



After heating to 108°–110°F, inoculate with ½ cup white vinegar.



Curd is separating into whey.



After stirring for a few minutes, large curds are formed.



Pouring the whey into a cheesecloth suspended over a bowl.



Pouring the curd into the cheesecloth after the whey has drained.



Tying the cheese in a cheesecloth to drain over a bowl.



Finished hanging and ready to form into a ball.



Fresh cheese ready to be refrigerated.