



Whey Ricotta

Use the by-product of homemade mozzarella to make another tasty cheese.

When making homemade mozzarella cheese (as shown in the March/April issue of Hobby Farm Home), make sure you reserve the whey. While most of the milk protein goes into the curds, there is still protein and calcium available in this by-product. If you make a couple batches of mozzarella cheese, and have what looks like 2 gallons of whey, you can make an easy (though low-yielding) ricotta cheese as a bonus. You need to do this within three hours of making the mozzarella.

Ingredients

2 gallons fresh whey, no more than 3 hours old

1/4 cup cider vinegar

1 quart whole milk, for increased yield (optional)

1/2 tsp. cheese salt (optional)

herbs (optional)

2 T. light or heavy cream (optional) Preparation

You can use the same pot from the mozzarella that you left the whey in. Add the milk, if desired. Heat the mixture to 200 degrees F. While stirring, add the vinegar and turn off the heat. You'll begin to see white bits floating around in the whey—this is called albuminous protein.

Ladle the curds into a colander lined with cheesecloth or, better yet, butter muslin (finer weave is better for tiny curds). Allow it to drain. When the muslin is cool enough to handle, tie the corners into a knot and hang above the sink to drain for several hours.

Once the cheese stops draining, untie the cloth wrap and put the cheese into a bowl. Add salt and herbs, if desired. For a richer cheese with more moisture, add a little of the cream.

Cover and refrigerate up to a week.

Makes 1 to 2 cups.