



# Fresh Mozzarella Know-How

## Ingredients

- 1 gallon whole milk (the high fat content is important)
- 1 ¼ teaspoon Know-How Brews & Foods citric acid
- 1 packet Know-How Brews & Foods lipase powder (approx. 1/8 tsp.)
- 1 packet Know-How Brews & Foods Thermophilic TA Culture (1/4 tsp.)
- ½ tablet rennet (cut with sharp knife or pill cutter)
- Cheese salt
- Distilled water (optional)
- Note: Do not use calcium chloride solution when making mozzarella.

## Instructions:

1. Prepare to heat your milk. Pour it into a sanitized pot, 6 quarts or larger. Over low heat, stir and slowly bring it up to 90° F. Maintain this temperature. See Cheesemaking Skill Sheet, #1
2. Dissolve the citric acid in a bit of distilled water. Add this solution to the warm milk, stirring in thoroughly. You will see a bit of curdling on the surface. Next, dissolve the lipase powder in a few tablespoons of distilled water and add it to the milk. Stir. Now sprinkle the culture over milk surface and let it soak in for 1 or 2 minutes. Gently but thoroughly stir into milk. Now cover your pot and allow it to ripen for about 45 minutes. Check the temperature periodically to be sure it is staying near 90° F.
3. Make sure you've dissolved the rennet in a few tablespoons of distilled water. Add it to the milk and mix it in thoroughly, for about 1 min. Let it sit undisturbed for at least 15 minutes, keeping the temperature at 90° F.
4. When you get a clean break, cut the curd. See Cheesemaking Skill Sheet, #2 & 3
5. First, let the curds heal for 5-10 minutes after cutting; next you are going to "cook" the curd for about an hour. Begin to gently stir the curds every 10 minutes or so for 45 minutes while slowly raising the temperature to 115° F. It is common for mozz curds to be fragile. Don't worry if the curd does not seem to stay in nice cubes. After about 45 min., don't stir but just allow the curds to settle for an additional 15 minutes.

See Cheesemaking Skill Sheet, #4

6. Spread a large piece of cheesecloth inside a colander or mesh strainer and place it over another pot. Gently scoop or pour the curds and whey over the cheesecloth. The whey can be saved for making ricotta. Gather up and tie the cheesecloth closed at the top; suspend it for 3-4 hours. This is crucial for proper acid development, which is the key to stretchy mozzarella cheese. See Cheesemaking Skill Sheet, #5
7. After 3-4 hours, you can begin to work the curd. It is best to do so right away, but you may wrap it and refrigerate it until the next day. There are two ways to work the curd: using a microwave, or the traditional way.

Microwave Method: Cut the curd into ½ inch cubes, place in a microwave-safe bowl, sprinkle liberally with salt, and microwave on high for 30 seconds at a time. In between microwave blasts, gradually and gently press the warmed cubes into a mass. Pour off any whey that comes off. CAUTION — the cheese is hot! Get it hot enough that is uncomfortable to hold, but do not allow it to melt. With brave hands, pick up the mass and gradually begin to pull and stretch it. Fold it back over and repeat. The cheese should turn smooth, elastic, and slightly shiny. Then you know it's done! Work it (gently knead) into a ball or a rope. Go to step 7 below.

Traditional Method: To prepare for this step, fill a medium saucepan with water (or just use your reserved whey) and heat the liquid to 160-165° F. Keep a thermometer in the pan so you can monitor its temperature. Also gather a cutting board, knife, slotted spoon, and a bowl of ice water for cooling the curd. You will be handling very hot cheese! The basic procedure is to cut up the cheese into ½ inch cubes, place them on a slotted spoon to submerge them in the hot water (160-165° F), let them heat and soften, pull them out of the water and place them into your hand, gently press them into a mass, and then pull and stretch them. This can be a tricky process but so satisfying once it works. Tips for success:

- Try cutting up and working just a handful of cubes at first.
  - Check for softness by plucking out a cube and squeezing to see if it is soft through.
  - Begin by gently squeezing the mass of soft curds together in your hand until it comes together in a ball or mass. After a little bit of squeezing, fold the mass in half and cradle it in your hand, holding it upright so it begins to pull and stretch itself by its own weight.
  - Keep dipping your mass or strand of curd back into the hot water. The curd must be hot in order to stretch. If you get it too hot, however, it will melt and fall apart.
  - Repeat “dip, stretch, fold, squeeze” until the cheese is smooth, elastic, and shiny.
  - Now pull or stretch the curd one last time, dip it in cheese salt work it back into its final shape (a ball or rope). If need be, you may dip it in the hot water once more to help it come together. (Ropes are essentially string cheese. Eat them soon to enjoy the best texture!)
8. Place your ball(s) or rope(s) into ice water to cool completely and firm up.
  9. The finished mozzarella should be patted dry. It may be stored in plastic wrap or sealed bags in the refrigerator; however, the sooner you eat it, the better the texture will be!