

Farm Cheese

Ingredients:

8 Cups Milk - whole milk preferred, but any will work. Even 8 cups of mixed up powdered milk
1 tsp sea salt
1/4 to 1/2 Cup Vinegar (I use 1/3 Cup)

Kitchen Tools:

Kitchen thermometer
Heavy bottom stainless steel pan
Wooden spoon, rubber or silicone spatula
Glass measuring cup

Place the 8 Cups of Milk in a heavy bottom pot and heat on medium heat until the milk reaches 180 degrees F. Watch the milk carefully during heating so that it does not burn or scorch to the bottom. Turn off the heat and add your vinegar. Stir gently, then allow to sit until milk and whey separate. Allow to sit for 1-50 minutes or so.

Strain through the strainer or cloth, saving the whey liquid to use in other recipes.

If you want the cheese to be softer, just drain it gently and store in containers. For a drier cheese, allow it to strain for additional time, checking occasionally to check consistency. Another option is to allow the cheese to drain, then press, while hot, into a container. I use a small square or rectangle container. Pressing tightly and then covering. Place in refrigerator and allow to chill. This method gives you a cheese block you can slice and use as a very mild cheese in sandwiches or diced on salads. Also good as "fried cheese" as an appetizer with crackers and dips. Use immediately or store in the refrigerator for up to 5 days.

NOTES:

-- Powdered milk, reconstituted, also works to make farm cheese (Ricotta). When I use powdered milk, I add a little extra powder and mix very well. It also helps to let it set overnight in the refrigerator. To eight cups of water, I would add an additional 1/2 to 1 Cup of powder and mix well.

-- You can vary the softness and hardness of this cheese by changing up the type or amount of vinegar. In my experience, rice vinegar seems to make a softer cheese, while white vinegar makes a very hard cheese. Mine was crumblier with white vinegar. This made it good for ravioli and sprinkling in quiche, but not so great in lasagna. It was horrid as a pizza topping.

-- I find that Farm Cheese never melts like mozzarella cheese does on pizza, but if made softer, it can be similar to ricotta on the pizza, and goes great in other pasta dishes like lasagna or baked ziti.

One very yummy vinegar to use is the leftover vinegar brine from a jar of jalapeños or banana peppers. We have used this, and it is wonderful. It tends to make a much softer cheese with a nice pickled-pepper flavor. It goes great on top of Southwestern Quinoa bowls and even sprinkled on top of a taco salad.

Experiment with red wine vinegar and others to see what you enjoy. Make sure to write down how much vinegar you use and your results. This will help you develop favorite recipes to use with your meals.

Using The Leftover Whey

Leftover whey can be used in place of milk to make things such as:

Breads and rolls

Baked Oatmeal

Flat Breads

Unleavened Breads

Quiches and Scrambled Eggs

Added to Smoothies

Using the Farm Cheese or Ricotta

Use in place of ricotta cheese in recipes such as:

Pizza

Lasagna

Ravioli filling

Stuffed shells

Manicotti

Cannoli Filling

Quiche

Eggplant or Chicken Parmesan

Eggplant Rollatini