MOZZARELLA

Can I use ultra-pasteurized (UP) milk for making mozzarella?

Do not make cheese with ultra-pasteurized milk. The casein in the milk will not form a curd because it has been damaged due to the high heat from the UP processing.

When making mozzarella is there a trick to using raw milk successfully?

Because raw milk has more fat, minerals and protein, then store bought milk, you will need to add 2 tsp of citric acid. Especially, if your animals (cow, goat or water buffalo) is eating plenty of grass in the summer months. Always, remember if you are using raw milk be sure to know where it is coming from, not all raw milk is safe to drink or make cheese with.

I am lactose intolerant - Can I use lactose free milk to make Mozzarella?

Lactose free milk contains a lactase that stops rennet from coagulating the milk properly. Lactose is a type of sugar and is required by the lactobacteria to grow, like adding a little sugar to yeast when making bread, so you cannot make cheese without some lactose. Lactose free milk is also often ultra pasteurized milk which will not work for cheese making.

My curd never formed, it just stayed like yogurt or cream? What did I do wrong?

When your curd fails to form, it is due to milk quality. 99% of the time it means your milk was damaged due to factors out of your control. Store-bought milk can be damaged from high heat (during processing), cold storage (too cold during storage) or transportation (the milk is jostled about too much and breaks it down).

If you want a milk that is resilient and is 'fail proof' – use non-homogenized milk. This is milk that has not been homogenized. Homogenization is done to most store-bought milk to prevent it from separating. The cream in milk naturally wants to rise to the top however when homogenized the fat molecules are broken down to become uniform thus preventing separation. Non-homogenized milk is more resilient and can handle acidity and heat better then homogenized milk. This doesn't mean homogenized milk won't work, it just may give varying results.

Here are ways to give your milk a great chance for success:
- leave a room temperature before you begin. It's a gentle way of warming your milk up before you begin the recipe. Starting out with cold fridge temp milk can be tougher on your milk molecules.
- Dilute your rennet in non-chlorinated water about 15 minutes ahead of time. This give your rennet a chance to 'wake up' ahead of time to become potent.
- Don't be an aggressive stirrer – if your stirs are becoming whisks, slow down my friend. This is especially important when you are making mozzarella, as acid in your milk makes your milk more susceptible to outside forces. If you stir, slow, occasional stirs make a big difference.

My curd is really grainy and never formed a ball- what went wrong?

This is due to milk quality for the most part. There is not much you can do when your curd is grainy. This is due to your milk responding to the acid. It is becoming brittle. Your milk may have lost quality through processing, traveling long distances or aging. Try different brands of milk until you find one that's consistent. 90% of problems when making mozzarella come down to poor quality milk.

Why won't my cheese stretch?

Your curd might still contain too much whey. This could be because of the pasteurization process, meaning the protein will hang tight to it's whey. Look for a milk that has been pasteurized at 170F or below. It also could be solved by draining your curd for a few minutes longer, pressing to get the extra moisture out before the stretching steps.

I kept my mozzarella balls in the water and now they are slimy- how should I store my cheese for best keeping? How long will it last?

We recommend covering them up completely in cool water (this can be tap water) for 2 – 3 hours. The water will help firm them up and lock them in place. After 2-3 hours, dump out the water and store in a sealed container. If you notice they are getting dry, wrap them in plastic wrap. A good sign they are getting dry is the surface will be turning from pale white to yellow shade.

I saw another recipe that uses calcium chloride- will this help make a better mozzarella?
Not with our recipe. Calcium Chloride is a salt solution added back to milk to restore the calcium balance that is taken away from the milk when it's pasteurized. Adding CC will stop the curd from stretching in this recipe.

We are having a dinner party and are wondering if we could make the recipe to step 6 ahead of time and store the curd and whey in the fridge. Then have our guests do the water bath method to make their own mozzarella.
Yes you can do this provided the curd is stored in the fridge to stop the acidity development. You can freezer the curd and then thaw it for the stretching stage as well.

Is their a problem with making a half a recipe?

You can make half a recipe - the rennet will be harder to divide however you can eyeball it and cut it as close to 1/8th of a tablet as possible. For citric you would using 3/4 of citric acid.

Can I double the recipe?

Yes and no. Yes you can make two batches at once, no you can't use the recipe we have given as cheese recipes do not double like baking recipes. For instance the double the rennet would be enough rennet for 5 batches. We'll post a double batch recipe asap.

What is the cheese cloth for?

At times the curd is harder to collect using a slotted spoon. Cheese cloth will help making collecting the curd easier. Also, you can make ricotta using cheese cloth with the leftover whey. Download a ricotta recipe from our website.

On my first attempt at making mozzarella my curds were not stable enough to hold. Is it possible to wait beyond 15 minutes or so?Or was it likely the milk that caused the lack of formation. Do I basically have ricotta now?

Waiting up to 20 minutes and if no curd forms then it is a problem with your milk. If a weak curd forms you may be able to bring it back to life with gentle cuts, a very gentle stirring. We like to say 'push' your curd gently on low-medium heat until you notice it firm up. As you near 105F if your curd is still weak, heat it until 110 F.
If none of the above works, you have ricotta.

Does anything in the kit need to be refrigerated for storage?

The rennet is best kept cold in the refrigerator or freezer. If you break open the blister pack and have a portion of a tablet remaining, this portion is best kept wrapped in plastic wrap to avoid moisture.

I am out of salt- is that a special type of salt or will ordinary table salt do?

Salt that in non-iodized will do. Most store-bought salt is non-iodized (table salt) but do check the label.

Different recipes give different directions on when to add the salt- When should I add salt?

You can add salt during the stretching process, as well as any other herbs or spices. If you add your salt to your curd mass before the stretch you risk making the curd weep out extra liquid; if you add it to the whey bath you have a salty whey, no bad thing, unless you want to save your whey for other uses where the salt might be unwanted.

My mozzarella tastes bland what can I do to add flavour?

Our salt amount is just an average, feel free to add more. Mozzarella can be seen as bland, this is because it is suppose to taste of milk and milk can have some wonderful flavour profiles. Feel free to add seasonings and experiment and be sure to let us know about your new discoveries.