

Cottage Cheese

(adapted from Home Cheese Making by Ricki Carroll)

You will need:

1 quart to 1 gallon milk

1/8 tsp. calcium chloride diluted in 1/4 cup water (if using store-bought milk- may not be necessary if using raw milk)

1 packet MA11 or Flora Danica direct-set mesophilic culture

1-2 tbsp. heavy cream (optional, for creamier texture)

cheese salt (optional)

herbs (optional)

chopped fresh fruit (optional)

Directions:

- 1) Heat the milk to 72° F, stirring occasionally to prevent scorching. If using calcium chloride, add it now.
- 2) Remove from heat. Add the starter and mix thoroughly. Cover & let set, trying to maintain 72° F (wrap a towel around pot to insulate if necessary). Allow to culture for 12-24 hours. (If using raw milk, start checking after 2 hours- also smaller quantities of milk may set faster). When ready, the curd will be soft and custard-like and will pull away from the side of the pan.
- 3) Cut the curd into 1/4-inch cubes and let set for 15 minutes, undisturbed.
- 4) Put back onto burner. Begin to increase the heat by one degree per minute until it reaches 100° F. Stir gently every few minutes to keep the curds from matting.
- 5) Maintain the temperature at 100° F for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally.
- 6) Increase the temperature to 112° F over a 15-minute period (a little less than one degree per minute).
- 7) Maintain the temperature at 112° for 30 minutes, or until the curds are firm. Test for firmness by squeezing a curd between your thumb & forefinger. If it still has a custard-like consistency inside, it is not ready and should be cooked a little longer.

- 8)** When the curds are sufficiently cooked, let them settle to the bottom of the pot for 5 minutes.
- 9)** Pour off the whey. Pour the curds into a colander lined with butter muslin or cheesecloth. Tie the corners of the cloth into a knot. If a less sour cottage cheese is desired, wash the curds by dipping the bag several times into a bowl of cool water.
- 10)** Let the bag drain for several minutes.
- 11)** Rinse the bag in a bowl of ice water to cool & place the bag in a colander to drain for about 5 minutes.
- 12)** Untie the bag & place the curds in a bowl. Break up any pieces that have matted. If desired, stir in the heavy cream to produce a creamier texture.
- 13)** Add the salt, herbs or fresh fruit to taste, if desired.
- 14)** Store in a covered container in the refrigerator for up to one week.