



TOP TIPS FOR MAKING CHEESE AT HOME

- **DON'T OVERSTIR** when adding the lemon and rennet – a quick stir is sufficient.
- Make sure you take your ingredients to the **EXACT TEMPERATURE** specified in the recipe.

TOP TIPS FOR MAKING MOZZARELLA

- The **TEMPERATURE** of the curd is very important in the stretching phase. The heat needs to penetrate the cheese and raise the internal temperature to 60°C before the 'stretch' can happen. The cheese will become hot to touch, to the extent that you may need to wear gloves to handle it.
- **STRETCH** your mozzarella – don't squeeze and knead. Gently pull and let it fall on itself – you are looking for a shiny, stringy texture. Kneading will result in too much liquid loss which can cause cheese to become tough and chewy. If your cheese stops stretching add a little more heat and stretch again; repeat until your cheese is shiny and stringy.



WHAT HAPPENED?

- **My mozzarella turned to ricotta.** Too much stirring when the lemon and rennet are added to the milk can cause this. Once the lemon and rennet are added, let the mixture sit off the heat to allow the curd to form. Too much stirring breaks the curds as they form and you end up with the ricotta-like curd. Try and buy local milk as some milk is ultra-pasteurised and this can block the action of the rennet.
- **My curds are lumpy and there is milk underneath.** The lemon was not stirred in quickly enough.

- **My curds crumbled when I heated them in the microwave to stretch.** This happens when you heat too long or your microwave is too powerful – start with a 30 second blast followed by 10 second blasts if further heating is required.
- **My curds dissolved into what looked like ricotta when I heated them.** Your curds were not strong enough – make sure you give your curds time to form properly before and after cutting. You can also try adding a little more rennet next time.
- **I've only achieved a low yield.** Let the curds set until the whey is clear, both before and after cutting the curds. If the curds need more time to form at any point, give them 5 or 10 minutes longer.



CAN I?

- **When I have drained my curds and they're ready to heat and stretch, can I refrigerate and stretch later?** Yes.

Remember, cheese making is not a science, and there is a certain amount of trial and error, so although you might not have perfect results first time, please persevere – the end product will be worth it.

Most of all, don't be afraid to experiment – you can always season your curds for a lovely fresh cheese spread!



Finally, if there are any keen cheese makers who would like to share their wisdom with us, we'd be delighted to include your hints and tips too, so please get in touch.