



Dairy Foods Consulting
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Ricotta and Ricottone

Ricotta cheese made exclusively from whey is called Ricottone. If milk is added to the whey or if the cheese is made entirely from milk it is called Ricotta. At pH 6.20-6.30, the solids will precipitate from the liquid and float thereby forming a layer of curd on top. This is then carefully ladled off and drained to make the cheese. At lower pH values, the precipitate will begin to sink to the bottom of the vat. This fine (more fragile) curd can be removed after the whey has been drained out of the vat.

This recipe works for a mixture of 2 parts fresh whey to 1 part milk.

Take whey directly from the cheese vat at the time of dipping or draining.

Heat while stirring to 160° F before adding any milk (to destroy the rennet enzyme and prevent early coagulation of the proteins).

Continue stirring and heating to 170° F. Add 2 teaspoons of salt per one gallon of liquid (0.25% by weight) and mix in quickly.

Continue heating while stirring to 185° F. Turn off heat and stop stirring. Skim the foam off the surface and watch for the curd to precipitate as small grains and blooms of larger curd masses. If this doesn't happen you will need to add an acid solution.

Mix 0.1% of citric acid powder (100% pure solids) per weight of liquid. This is approx. 4 grams ((heaping 1/2 tsp.) per gallon of liquid. This much citric acid should be dissolved in 0.5 cups water. Alternatively add approx. 1 ounce of vinegar per gallon. Add half of either solution quickly to the center of the vat and stir in rapidly for 5-10 seconds. Watch for the curd to precipitate as small grains and blooms of larger curd masses. Add more of either solution if necessary. If too acid much is added at this time, the curds will begin to sink to the bottom and the cheese will not be sweet. The amount of citric acid or vinegar used depends on the pH of the liquid. If the whey is more acidic, less may be used. If the whey or whey/milk mixture is too acidic, the curd will precipitate and remain at the bottom of the vat. If the correct amount of acid is added, a clear separation of white curds and bright green whey will be seen.

As the curds are precipitating, use a perforated ladle to gently move them from the sides to the center of the vat. These lumps of curds will begin to stick together thereby forming a homogeneous mass, which remains floating on top of the liquid. The color of the whey will change during this time, becoming clear green, which indicates that all of the solids are precipitating from the liquid. Work around the vat with the ladle until the precipitation is finished.

Let the curds rest for 10-15 min.

Ladle the curds gently into draining forms. Let the curds drain for 15-30 min. after ladling is completed. Move to a refrigerator or cold room. After draining the cheese can be also be spooned out of the draining forms into plastic containers with lids and cooled in ice water. This disrupts the structure of the curd somewhat. Traditionally, a perforated metal can (similar in size to a can used to make milk shakes at soda fountains) was used for draining and the cheese was sold in the can with wax paper bound over the top. There are thin, plastic cup-style draining forms available now for this purpose.

Other forms of acid such as lemon juice (2 lemons per gallons) and vinegar (1 ounce per gallon) can be used to precipitate the curds. The best recommendation is to add a small amount to the vat, check for precipitation, add more if needed, etc.. In this way the appropriate amount can be determined.

Ricottone and Ricotta cheese are very high in moisture and contain most of the lactose from the milk. Therefore, the shelf-life is short. It may last 10 days at best.

Ricottone has a very smooth, fine-grained texture compared to Ricotta. This is a lovely cheese. Ricotta is made from whey and milk blends and the cheese has a more curdy texture than Ricottone. Blends of whey and partly skimmed milk produce a



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drier, more curdy Part-skim cheese compared to the creamier Whole milk cheese made using whole milk and whey. Whole milk Ricotta is made from whole milk only and has a curdier texture than Ricotta that is made from whey and milk blends.

Yields of Ricottone can be 3-4 lb. cheese per 100 lb. from goat and cow milk whey and double that from sheep milk whey. The 2:1, whey: milk (cow) blend used in the recipe yields 10 lb. cheese from 100 lb. liquid.