

CREAM CHEESE

1 gallon of whole milk, homogenized and pasteurized
¼ cup of cultured buttermilk
2 drops of liquid rennet or 1/8 teaspoon of Flora Danica culture

Warm the milk to 80°F

Added buttermilk or culture and mix in well by using an up and down motion with a strainer, without breaking the surface of the milk. The idea is to avoid incorporating air.

Let milk sit in a warm place, maintaining the 80°F temperature

Add rennet at when pH hits 6.0 if you have a meter, or when the milk has a pleasant distinct sour cream/buttery smell. This would be about 1-1/2 to 3 hours.

Keep it at 80°F in a water bath (I used to use an electric roaster) for 24 hours, at which point it should have set as thick as yogurt and the pH should read 5.0

Ladle the uncut curd into a cheese cloth lined colander and drain for a 4 hours, then tie up the corners of the cheesecloth and let it hang another 20 hours at room temperature.

Take it out of the cheesecloth and mix in ½ teaspoon of salt, or more if it suits you.

Rennet Note:

Rennet is a pretty useful thing to have, but hard to find where I live. I get mine by mail from thecheesemaker.com. If you don't have liquid rennet, try using a quarter of a junket tablet well dissolved in cool water. You can make this cheese without any rennet, but you'll get a better yield with rennet.

Ladling Note:

I like to use a shallow skimmer when I make this, taking thin slices of curd and gently easing them into the cloth lined colander. A soup ladle works, too, but will give you a moister cheese, good for making desserts.

Salting Note:

If you want a milder sweeter cheese, salt after you've drained for 4 hours, then hang for 20 hours. The salt stops the ripening process, or at least slows it way down.

Milk Note:

If you've got access to raw milk, you don't need the buttermilk or culture.

If you want a richer cheese, add more cream and less milk.

If you have to cut back on fats, use 2% milk. The yield will be lower but it will still taste pretty good.