

I've cobbled this recipe together from other recipes, mostly based on Fankhauser's method. It turns out nicely for me every time and has much more flavor than the citric acid method.

5 gallons skimmed milk  
2 cups yogurt or 1/2 teaspoon powdered thermophilic culture  
1/8 teaspoon powdered calf rennet (or as recommended on your rennet package) I've also used 4 Junket rennet tablets  
1/2 cup canning salt

Warm milk to 90 degrees Fahrenheit. Whisk yogurt until thin, then stir well into warmed milk. If using powdered culture, whisk into about a cup of warmed milk, then stir into the kettle of milk. Allow to ripen for 1 hour, maintaining 90\* temp.

Dissolve rennet in 1/4 cup cool water (tap water if non-chlorinated, otherwise, use distilled water). Gently stir into milk, stirring for no more than 20-30 seconds. Allow to set, maintaining temperature, until clean break achieved. Usually 30-60 minutes.

Cut curd into 1/2 inch pieces, gently stir up larger pieces from the bottom and cut. Allow to set 15 minutes to allow curds to heal.

Without stirring, remove whey to level of curds (reserve whey in clean container). Add a gallon of cold water to rinse, then drain in cloth-lined colander, covering with a clean cloth or lid.

Allow to sit at room temperature (65 to 75 degrees) overnight to ripen the curd and bring it to proper stretching acidity.

Use Fankhauser's method for testing for proper level of acidity (taken directly from his website).

"Checking for proper acidity using the "spinning" technique:

- a) Heat 2 c water to 85°C. (185 F)
- b) Drop several chunks of curd in, stir gently with a fork.
- c) Test for acidity by pulling and folding the hot curd. If it softens and draws into strings ("spins"), and appears glossy on the surface, it is ready. If it breaks when you pull it, let sit several more hours until it does."

Once the curd spins, heat one gallon of reserved whey plus 1 cup kosher salt (or 1/2 cup canning salt) to 175 - 180 degrees Fahrenheit. Cut cheese curd into chunks about 1 inch square (doesn't have to be

exact). I use a fryer basket to contain my curd chunks, placing about 1-2 cups of chunks in the basket and submerge it in the whey. After about 30 seconds, remove a chunk of cheese and start pulling on it. The center may still be cool, so if it breaks, just mush it back together, then put it back in the whey and allow it to warm a bit longer. The curd should be hot, so you will probably want to wear a couple pairs of latex exam gloves to protect your hands.

When the chunks are warm enough to hold together, I knead them all into a soft-ball sized mass and start pulling the curd, like pulling taffy, stretching and folding. If it gets cool enough to break, I put it back in the whey to heat up again.

Continue with the process until the cheese becomes smooth and glossy. Some blisters may form on the surface as well. Then put into a bowl of cold water to set up the cheese and go on to the next batch of curd, until it is all stretched and has been cooled in the water bath.

Remove from the water and allow to air dry for a few minutes. You can blot any remaining water with a paper towel. Store airtight in the fridge for up to a week. This cheese grates and freezes well, too.