

# Ricotta

By Lady Isabell Winter

8L Whey (by-product from making cheese)

1 Tb salt (un-iodized table salt best)

40ml vinegar (I use white wine vinegar but hope to experiment)

Heat whey to 85-90°C

Add 1 Tb salt (un-iodized table salt) and 40ml vinegar to the hot whey (between 80-85°C, but must add when above 80°C)

Stir gently, then allow the ricotta to come to the surface – will look like miso soup with little clouds forming.

Carefully skim the floating ricotta off the surface and into a cloth-lined frame

Leave to drain and apply a little pressure overnight.

## Notes:

Must be made straight away.

Lasts 4-6 days

Yields approx 250gm from 8L whey

- You can add milk to whey if not a lot of whey and you want to yield more ricotta, **MUST** wait till after whey has been heated to 60°C + so it kills rennet (other wise rennet will start solidifying the new milk added) which also means any milk can be used it does not have to be non-homogenised as you are not using rennet.
- Feasting: adding some rose water and ground or sliced almonds to the ricotta makes a very nice dish at a feast.
- Ricotta is Italian for "recooked" because it is made by "cooking" whey which is produced when the curds are separated for cheese making.
- Heating the acidified whey denatures the protein causing it to precipitate out as a fine curd. This small-grained curd may be then dipped out or filtered out by pouring through a fine cloth.
- Because ricotta is made from whey, rather than milk, it is a whey cheese, not technically a "cheese"
- Can be frozen
- The Greek antiquarian who wrote volumes on food, Athenaeus (c. A.D. 170-230), talks about "tender cheese" at a banquet. We don't know if this is ricotta, but he also mentions a cheese from Sicily that was well known. Ricotta cheese, which is generally recognized as having been invented in Sicily, is known in the language of the island by another name: zammataru, a word in Sicilian meaning "dairy"

farmer." This word is derived from the Arabic za'ama, meaning "cow," leading to the supposition that ricotta might have its origins in the Arab-Sicilian era.

- The first depiction of the making of ricotta is an illustration in the medical treatise known as the Tacuinum sanitatis (medieval health handbook), the Latin translation of the Arab physician Ibn Butlan's eleventh century Taqwim al-sihha.
- Ortensio Lando in his Commentario delle piu notabili e mostruose cose d'Italia published in 1548 has his fictional traveler go to Val Calci, at some distance from Pisa, for the best ricotta in the world.  
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