Ricotta

Heat 2 litres of milk to 90 ºC in a heavy based saucepan while continuously stirring. As the milk reaches temperature, quickly add 100ml of white vinegar. Give it 2 good stirs then turn off the heat. Let it rest for 20 minutes to allow the curd to knit together to form a raft on top of the whey. Transfer the curd using a slotted spoon into a hoop and drain for ½ hour. The ricotta is ready to use straight away or store in fridge until required.

Magnificent in Italian Baked Ricotta muffins or Spinach & Ricotta Cannelloni

Paneer

Heat 2 litres of milk to 90 ºC in a heavy based saucepan while continuously stirring. As the milk reaches temperature, quickly add 100ml of lemon juice. Give it 2 good stirs then turn off the heat. Let it rest for 20 minutes to allow the curd to knit together to form a raft on top of the whey. Transfer the curd using a slotted spoon into a hoop, press between 2 hoops and drain for 2 hours. The paneer is ready to use straight away or store in fridge until required.

Paneer is a delightful inclusion in many Indian Curries

Traditional Method for Haloumi

Ingredients:

* 3 litres whole milk
* 1 junket tablet or 1 ml Rennet
* 1 tablespoon cooled boiled water
* Salt
* Large saucepan to hold 3 litres
* Cheese cloth lined colander
* Thermometer
* Long bladed knife

Warm milk to 33ºC Dissovle tablet or rennet in water and stir into the milk. Continue to stir for 20seconds to be sure the rennet is evenly distributed

Let the milk rest until the surface has gelled, usually about 30 minutes. You can check for gelling by touching the surface of the milk with the flat side of a spoon.

Cut the curd into 2cm pieces with the long knife, cutting horizontally, vertically and diagonally across the depth of the curd.

Rest the curd for 10 more minutes.

Now stir the curd gently for a minute or two to encourage the whey to separate

Pour the curds into a cheese cloth-lined colander placed over a pot(you will be using this pot of whey later), and let drain for several ours or overnight until no whey is left standing with the curd.

When the curd is dry enough to stick together well, cut them into approximately 2 cm wide strips. Bring pot of drained whey almost to boil(around 90ºC) and drop in the cheese strips. Do not let it boil.

Let cook for about 10-15 minutes, or until the curd floats to the surface. Remove the curd from the whey and lightly salt. You may wish to press into a mould, the resulting chees is soft and a bit ragged around the edges. Cool for 1-2hours.

Haloumi for time poor Cheesemakers

Ingredients:

* 3 litres whole milk
* 1 junket tablet or 1 ml Rennet
* 1 tablespoon cooled boiled water
* Salt
* Large saucepan to hold 3 litres
* Large bowl to hold 3 litres
* Cheese cloth lined colander
* Thermometer
* Long bladed knife
* Latex glove
* 300ml mould

Warm milk to 33ºC Dissovle tablet or rennet in water and stir into the milk. Continue to stir for 20seconds to be sure the rennet is evenly distributed

Let the milk rest until the surface has gelled, usually about 30 minutes. You can check for gelling by touching the surface of the milk with the flat side of a spoon.

Cut the curd into 2cm pieces with the long knife, cutting horizontally, vertically and diagonally across the depth of the curd.

Rest the curd for 10 more minutes.

Now stir the curd gently for a minute or two to encourage the whey to separate

Place bowl in the microwave and cook on high for 2 minutes. Stir the curd for 10 seconds and cook for another 2 minutes.

Stir again but put your hand in and squeeze some curd chunks. If the curd is still very soft cook for a further minute.

Start squeezing the curd and you will find that the curd changes from soft to firm and sticky. Gather more and more into big lumps. When there is no soft bits left pour the lot through the colander.

Sprinkle 2 teaspoons of salt over the curd and start pressing into mould. The mould will appear far too small for the amount of curd but continue pressing down into the mould and it will all start to compact.

Let it cool and it’s ready…..fire up the barbie!

Italian Baked Ricotta Tarts

Makes 12

500 g ricotta

50g chopped semi-dried tomatoes

50g chopped kalamata olives

1 clove crushed garlic

50g grated romana or parmesan

Small amount of olive oil

Bacon/ bruschetta – you can add this to the tarts or serve the tarts with this.

Method

Mix ricotta, olives, semi-dried tomatoes, romano or parmesan & garlic in a bowl.

Place oil into silicon muffin tray or similar & preheat in a hot oven for 10 minutes until oil is hot.

Place mixture into muffin holes, smooth it iut & bake in a moderate oven for 15minutes or until golden & a crust has formed.