

# Homemade Feta Cheese



Feta cheese makes a wonderful addition to salads or sandwiches, or as a garnish for meat or vegetables. Generally made with goat milk, it can be made with cow milk if desired.

## Supplies:

- A large pot (if metal, be sure it's non-reactive such as stainless steel)
- A wooden spoon
- Colander
- Curd knife or other long blade knife
- Thermometer (Basic or Digital)

- Butter muslin or tea towel

## Using Calcium Chloride:

Milk that is not produced locally often is not as fresh and goes through additional processing to ensure its safe arrival at the store.

The amount of calcium in that milk is often reduced through the heat-treating process which leads to softer cheese curd.

Calcium chloride is an additive that helps store-bought milk (and goats milk) form a firmer curd when setting.

If you are using non-local milk to make feta, consider using calcium chloride to improve the chances of firm curd formation.

## Ingredients:

- 1 gallon goat or cow milk (avoid UHT or ultra-pasteurized milk)
- Rennet:
  - 1/2 tsp. liquid rennet **OR**
  - 1/2 rennet tablet diluted in 1/4 cup cool water
- Mesophilic culture (choose one of the following):
  - 1 packet feta cheese starter culture
  - 1 packet direct-set mesophilic starter culture
  - 1 Tbsp. yogurt
- 1/8 tsp. calcium chloride diluted in 1/4 cup water (optional)

## Instructions:

1. Warm the milk in a stainless steel (or other non-reactive) pot to 86°F. If using calcium chloride, incorporate the mixture of diluted calcium chloride into the milk as the milk starts to warm up.
2. **Add** the culture to the milk and **stir** thoroughly. Allow the milk to sit undisturbed for an hour at room temperature.
3. Once the milk is ready, **dilute** the rennet in 1/4 cup cool water. **Mix** the rennet/water into the milk using an up-and-down motion with your spoon (not a stirring motion). Incorporate the rennet but do not over-mix.
4. **Place** a lid on the pot and let the milk mixture sit undisturbed overnight. The next morning, check that the milk has gelled and there is a clean break in the curd.
5. Use a knife to **cut** the curd into 1/2-inch cubes. If necessary, use very clean hands to check the bottom of the pot for curds that may have been missed.

6. **Gently stir** the curd off and on over the next 20 minutes. The curds should become somewhat retracted.
7. **Place** a tea towel, cotton bag, butter muslin, or multi-layered cheese cloth in a colander. **Pour** in the curds and allow the visible whey to drain off. Once the whey has drained, tie the cloth in knots and hang it over the sink or a bowl. Allow the curd to **drain for another 4 hours** or until no more whey drips off.

### **Brining Feta:**

While feta can be eaten fresh, the flavor is more pronounced if it is aged in a brine solution.

1. **Make a brine** solution using 1/3 cup non-iodized salt and 1/2 gallon of water.
2. **Place** the curds in the brine solution in a jar with a lid in the fridge.
3. **Brine for 4 to 5 days** if using store-bought goat milk or for 30 days if using farm-fresh goat milk.

**Extra Tip:** If you find that your curd doesn't set firmly enough, some cheese makers suggest mixing 1/8 tsp. calcium chloride diluted in 1/4 cup water into the milk as it is heating the next time you make feta.