

# Raw Milk Ricotta

- **Ingredients:**

- 1 gallon of fresh raw milk (non-pasteurized, non-homogenized)
- 1/4 cup apple cider vinegar (or fresh lemon juice, for curdling)
- 1/2 teaspoon unrefined sea salt (optional, for flavor)

- **Equipment:**

- Large stainless steel pot
- Wooden spoon
- Instant-read thermometer
- Fine-mesh strainer or colander
- Cheesecloth or butter muslin
- Large bowl



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- **Instructions:**

- Heat the Milk:

- Pour the raw milk into a large pot and slowly heat it over medium-low heat. Stir occasionally to prevent scorching. Warm the milk to 185°F (do not boil). Use an instant-read thermometer for accuracy.

- Add the Acid:

- Once the milk reaches 185°F, remove the pot from heat. Gradually stir in the apple cider vinegar or lemon juice, one tablespoon at a time. You'll notice the milk curdling as curds (solids) separate from the whey (liquid). Let it sit undisturbed for 5-10 minutes to fully curdle.

- **Prepare the Strainer:**

- Line a fine-mesh strainer or colander with cheesecloth or butter muslin and set it over a large bowl to catch the whey.

- **Strain the Curds:**

- Carefully ladle the curds and whey into the lined strainer. Allow the whey to drain for 15-30 minutes, depending on your desired consistency. For creamier ricotta, drain less; for drier ricotta, drain longer.

- **Add Salt (Optional):**

- If you prefer a lightly salted ricotta, gently mix in the sea salt after straining.

- **Store or Serve:**

- Transfer the ricotta to a clean, airtight container. Refrigerate and use within 5-7 days.

- **Tips:**

- **Save the Whey:** The leftover whey is rich in nutrients and can be used for baking, fermenting, or as a protein-rich addition to smoothies.

- **Acidity Adjustment:** If the milk doesn't curdle easily, add a little more vinegar or lemon juice (1 teaspoon at a time) and gently stir.

- **Texture Variations:** For a creamier ricotta, stir in a splash of raw cream after draining.

- **Serving Suggestions:**

- Spread on toast with honey and nuts for a sweet treat.

- Use as a filling for lasagna, ravioli, or stuffed vegetables.

- Mix with herbs, garlic, or lemon zest for a savory dip or topping.

- This raw milk ricotta captures the essence of traditional dairy preparation while preserving the beneficial enzymes and probiotics of raw milk. Let me know if you'd like additional variations or tips!