How much cheese to expect

The amount of cottage cheese formed from a gallon of milk depends upon the moisture content of the curd, the amount of curd formed, and how much is lost in the cutting and washing process. One gallon of milk will furnish about four cups of dry curd.

If your cheese is not perfect

It may be tough and rubbery if too high a temperature or too long a cooking time was used; not enough cultured buttermilk was added; or the curd was cut and heated too soon.

The curds may be too soft or too fine because the curd was left too long before heating or stirred too vigorously; too low a temperature or too short a heating time was used; the curds were stirred too much during washing; or the wash water was too warm.

Making COTTAGE CHEESE at Home

RUTH N. KLIPPELSTEIN
Extension Nutrition Specialist
Oregon State University

COTTAGE CHEESE is as much a household staple as milk, butter, and eggs. Available in several different forms, it is fresh and waiting for the homemaker's use. Occasionally, however, a windfall of surplus skim milk makes the modern homemaker wonder how grandma made her "pot cheese" and want to try her hand. You can be sure grandma left no recipe! She just knew how!

You can do as well, though. Here are step-by-step directions for making high-quality cottage cheese the modern way. Follow directions carefully. Be sure to use a thermometer to accurately control the temperature of the cheese making. A quart of mild flavored dry cheese curds should reward you for each gallon of skim milk you "set." Few homes will be able to control the conditions as carefully as the modern dairy so do not expect such uniform size and texture for your curds. But you should soon rival grandma's best by following these instructions carefully.

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Cooperative Extension Service
Oregon State University Corvallis
You will need these supplies

Pasteurized skimmed milk—1 gallon milk for every 4 cups dry curd desired
Cultured buttermilk—the kind available at every dairy or grocery
Salt—any table salt
Thin cream or half and half—1 cup for every 2 cups dry cheese curds

And this equipment

Large kettle or canner, suitable for heating milk
Dairy thermometer (or other registering in the range from 75° to 170° F)
Long bladed knife or spatula
Long handled spoon for stirring
Cheesecloth
Large colander or strainer

Here's how to proceed

1. Pasteurize fresh skim milk by heating to 145° for 30 minutes or 170° for 30 seconds. Cool the milk quickly to 90° F.
2. Add 1 cup cultured buttermilk per gallon of skim milk. Stir well.
3. Cover and allow to stand at room temperature (75°) until a firm curd has developed. At this temperature and with this amount of buttermilk it should take 5-7 hours. Test by drawing a knife through the curd. When there is a clear whey line, the curd is ready to “cut.” If it is desirable to allow the curd to form overnight, cool the milk to 75° before adding the buttermilk and then add only ¼ cup of buttermilk per gallon of milk. This will slow the curd formation—taking 10-14 hours.

4. Cut the curd by slicing into 2” cubes with the knife or spatula. With spoon, work the cut slices on their side for the final cross cut.
5. Heat the curd, stirring gently, to a temperature of 120°. Test the firmness of the curd by dropping a few curds into cold water. When the chilled curds are firm and hold together, the cheese is “cooked” enough. Occasionally the temperature must go as high as 130° to achieve the desired texture.
6. Remove from heat and dip off whey.
7. Fill the container with cold tap water. Stir gently and pour off water.
8. Wash again with cold water, pour off excess water.
9. Line a large sieve, colander, or strainer with cheesecloth. Pour contents of kettle onto cloth. Allow to drain without disturbing for 30 minutes.
10. Gently lift the sides of the cloth several times to hasten draining.
11. When most of the whey has drained off and the curd is dry, transfer to a large bowl for creaming or use in recipes calling for uncreamed cottage cheese.

How to cream cottage cheese

Measure the dry curds. For each cup of curds plan to use ½ cup thin cream or half and half milk. Use ½ teaspoon salt for each cup of curd. Add the cream and salt to the curd, stirring gently. Cover and refrigerate until used. The dry curd will keep better if not creamed until desired for the table.
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