

FETA-INSPIRED (COW MILK)

Traditional Feta is an authentic Greek cheese and is a PDO (Protected Designation of Origin) product. This means the cheese must be made in a specific region under rigid guidelines for process, ingredients, and animal type. True Feta is made from 100% sheep's milk or mixed with up to 30% goat's milk. This recipe is not an authentic Feta recipe as it is made with cow's milk and added lipase to create that classic tangy flavor sought out by Feta enthusiasts. This recipe approximates what I can find as "Feta" in my local grocery store.



EQUIPMENT

- 4-gallon (16 L) stainless-steel pot
- Long-handled stainless-steel spoon
- 12" (30 cm) thermometer, cheese or digital
- Curd cutter, such as a long-handled icing spatula or a long knife
- Stainless-steel measuring spoons
- 3 glass measuring cups
- 90-weave cheesecloth
- A dowel or other method to hang the cheese
- Large stainless-steel colander
- Pot large enough to catch the whey
- Cutting board
- Plastic ripening box
- Food-safe container to hold the brine



PLEASE NOTE

Sterilize your equipment and sanitize all work surfaces prior to beginning any cheesemaking recipe.

Timing at a Glance	Estimated Time
Sanitize/sterilize	20 min
Heat milk	10 min
Activate lipase	
Acidify milk	1 hour 5 min
Coagulate milk	1 hour 5 min
Cut curds	15 min
Stir curds	50 min
Drain curds	5 min
Time to hang step	3 hours, 50 min
Hang cheese	16 hours
Slice and salt cheese	10 min
Ripen cheese	72 hours
Estimated Total Time	4 days
Brine cheese for storage	Up to 6 months



PLEASE NOTE

Prepare the brine before the cheese-making process. Bring ½ gallon or (2 L) of non-chlorinated water to 205 °F (96 °C). Add 6 oz of non-iodized salt or (170 g) and 1 Tbsp+1 tsp (20 ml) of vinegar, and 1 tsp (5 ml) of liquid calcium chloride. Stir well until salt is dissolved. Let the brine cool to room temperature. This is a storage brine and, as such, contains more vinegar than my other brine recipes.

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INGREDIENTS

For the cheese:

2-gallons (8 L) pasteurized non-homogenized whole milk

½ tsp mild lipase dissolved in ¼ cup (60 ml) non-chlorinated water

¼ tsp mesophilic culture (such as C101)

½ tsp liquid calcium chloride dissolved in ¼ cup (60 ml) non-chlorinated water

1 tsp liquid single strength rennet dissolved in ¼ cup (60 ml) non-chlorinated water

3 tsp non-iodized salt

For the 10% brine solution:

½ gallon (2 L) non-chlorinated water

6 oz (170 g) or about ¾ cup (175 ml) of non-iodized salt

1 Tbsp + 1 tsp (20 ml) white vinegar

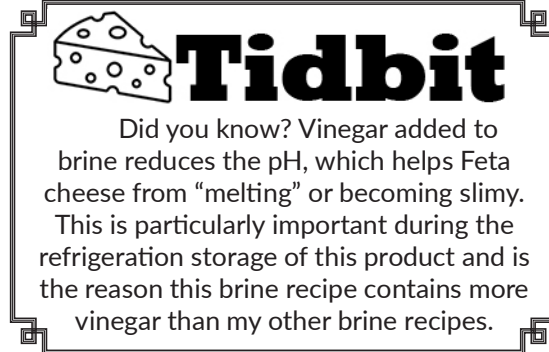
1 tsp (5 ml) liquid calcium chloride



DIRECTIONS

Step 1. Activate the lipase. Add the lipase to ¼ cup (60 ml) of non-chlorinated water and let it rest for 20 minutes. This step can be completed as the milk is heating. Pour the milk into the pot, slowly heat to 86 °F (30 °C) and stir occasionally. After it has rehydrated for 20 minutes, add the lipase mixture and stir for 30 seconds.

Step 2. Acidify the milk. Once the milk has reached the target temperature of 86 °F (30 °C), turn off the heat and sprinkle the mesophilic culture on top of the milk. Let



stand for 5 minutes. Stir the culture into the milk with an up/down motion for one minute. Cover the pot, and let the milk rest for 1 hour.

Step 3. Coagulate the milk. Add the calcium chloride mixture and stir with an up/down motion for 30 seconds. Add the rennet mixture and stir with an up/down motion for 30 seconds to 1 minute. Put the lid on the pot and let the milk rest for 45 minutes. Check for a clean break. If there is not a clean break, wait another 5-10 minutes and check again. Maintain the temperature at 86 °F (30 °C).

A clean break is a test used to determine that the whey separated from the curd mass is clear, which indicates the curd mass is ready to be cut. Slide a knife into the mass at a 45° angle and gently pull up towards the ceiling. The curd should split in a clean line, and the whey seeping into the cut should be clear, not milky. As an alternative, the knife can be used to cut a vertical slit into the mass and used to pull the mass slightly over to one side. The slice should be clean, not ragged, and the whey that seeps into the cut should be clear. Reference the Feta with cow's milk video on my YouTube channel to view a demonstration.

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Step 4. Cut the curds. With a long knife, cut the curds into ½ inch (1.25 cm) cubes. Cut vertically, then cut horizontally, tipping the pot to assist with the horizontal cuts. Cover the pot with the lid and allow the curds to heal for 5 minutes.

Step 5. Stir the curds. Gently stir the curds for 5 minutes, then cover for 20 minutes. Gently stir again for another 5 minutes, then cover again for an additional 20 minutes.

Step 6. Drain the curds. Line a colander with butter muslin, and place it over a pot. Drain the curds into the colander while the pot beneath catches the whey.

Step 7. Hang the curds. Take the corners of the butter muslin and tie the bundle to make a ‘pouch.’ Run a dowel under the knot and use it to suspend the cheese over a pot. Anchor the other end of the dowel with something heavy. Let the cheese hang for 4 hours.

Step 8. Shape the cheese (optional). Remove the cheese bundle from the dowel and place the cheese on a cutting board. While the cheese is still inside the butter muslin, press it with your hands to form a square. This will help to create a squarish shape. If this is not desired, move to step 9.

Step 9. Re-hang the cheese. Replace the dowel under the knot and hang the cheese for an additional 12 hours. The cheese will hang for a total of 16 hours (steps 7-9).

Step 10. Slice and salt the cheese. Untie the knot from the dowel and remove the cheese from the butter muslin. Place the curd block on a cutting board and slice into 1” thick slices. Sprinkle both sides of the cheese slices with a total of 3 tsp of non-iodized salt. This step both flavors the cheese and draws more whey from the cheese.

Step 11. Ripen the cheese. Place the cheese on a draining mat in an airtight container. Placing the cheese on a mat will prevent it from sitting in the whey. Allow it to age on the counter at room temperature for 72 hours. Check the cheese every 24 hours and drain the excess whey from the container.

Step 12. Brine the cheese. Place the slabs of cheese into the prepared brine. The cheese and the brine should be at the same temperature when the cheese is introduced to the brine.

This cheese can be stored for up to 6 months in the brine at refrigerator temperature. Be sure that the cheese is completely submerged in the brine during storage. When the cheese is retrieved from the brine, be sure to use clean hands or sterilized equipment to avoid contaminating the cheese.

Yield: This recipe produces roughly 2 lb (.9 kg) of Feta.



WINE PAIRING

Use your Feta to make Tirokafteri, a classic Greek spicy appetizer. Combine Feta with roasted red peppers, olive oil, roasted garlic, a little Greek yogurt, a dash of red wine vinegar and some hot dried pepper flakes. Tirokafteri loosely means flaming cheese, so use a liberal hand with those spicy peppers! Blend the ingredients together in a food processor, and serve the cheese with warm pita bread. Pair it with a crisp white wine that can complement the salty and spicy elements of the dip, such as Assyrtiko (a Greek white wine) or Sauvignon Blanc.