



## QUESO FRESCO TIPS

Revised 1/23/04

### TO KILL BACTERIA

- In order to use un-pasteurized (raw) milk, heat-treatment is necessary for the product to be safe. True pasteurization can only be done commercially with special equipment. **Use of commercially pasteurized milk is encouraged.**
- Before use thermometers should be checked and calibrated. **For instructions to calibrate refer to reference sheet, "Metal-Stem Thermometer Calibration".**
- When heat-treating un-pasteurized milk hold the temperature at 145°F for 30 minutes. **Do not let the heat fluctuate. If the temperature at any time goes below 145 degrees F., the timing must be started over again at 30 minutes.** Heat milk uncovered. The milk must be cooled in the refrigerator before making it into cheese since a temperature above 90 degrees F. will destroy the rennet.
- Always clean the thermometer thoroughly before returning it to the storage sleeve.
- **Do not use galvanized pots for heating milk or making the cheese.** Use stainless steel if possible, but other pots can be used if they are heavy enough to prevent scorching of the milk. A heat diffuser can be used under the pan to reduce the chance of scorching the product. Heat diffusers can be found at most "Dollar Stores".

### SANITATION

- Solution: 1 T. bleach to 1 gallon of water. To sanitize using a bleach solution, use luke warm water rather than hot water. Heat neutralizes the sanitizing power of bleach.

### USING THE RECIPE

- Use whole or not less than 2% milk. Whole milk has more milk solids resulting in more curd. Goat's and sheep's milk can also be used. Both have more solids than cow's milk, but the flavor will be different.
- If the rennet is added before heating the milk, it will not harm the outcome of the finished product. However, **do not heat the rennet to more than 90 degrees F. or the curd will not form.**
- Watch heat closely, **if using a gas stove it will heat faster than electric.**
- Do not make cheese in an air-conditioned room.
- **Do not stir**, when letting stand for curds to form.
- To prepare cheesecloth, **spray lightly with cooking oil spray to prevent the curds from sticking to the cheesecloth.**

- Form the cheese while curds are still fairly warm. Squeeze gently and tighten up on the cheesecloth. When forming cheese, more layers of cheesecloth may be used to get out more whey. Cheesecloth is less expensive if purchased by the yard at a fabric store. **Do not use just any type of fabric. Cheesecloth is designed to be used with food; other fabrics contain dyes that should not be eaten.**
- Cheese mold suggestions: large tuna fish can with bottom removed; small round plastic container with the lid and bottom cut out; 3 inch x 1 inch piece of PVC pipe. Spray the mold lightly with spray cooking oil to help remove cheese from mold.
- To remove more whey from the curd, wrap the cheese in cheesecloth, place a weight on top and refrigerate overnight. This will be a drier cheese that will crumble.
- Cheese can be stored in the refrigerator for up to one week or frozen.

#### **OTHER TIPS**

- Crumble cheese on tacos, burritos, chili, or beans.
- Any type of vinegar may be used as long as it is 5% acid. Lemon juice can be substituted for vinegar for a change of taste.
- Diced chilies or jalapeno peppers may be mixed in with the curds when forming the cheese. Fresh herbs such as dill, parsley, green onions, chopped garlic, and others may be added.
- The amount of salt can also be adjusted to suit your taste. 1-  $\frac{3}{4}$  teaspoons is quite salty.

**CAUTION: Pregnant women, the elderly, and people with weakened immune systems should not eat soft cheese such as queso fresco if it is made from raw (unpasteurized) milk, even if it has been heat-treated. Only cheese made from commercially pasteurized milk is safe.**

#### **COST**

\$ .04 vinegar  
 .26 rennet  
 1.29 buttermilk  
 1.75 milk

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**\$2.84 TOTAL**

**Each recipe makes 8-12 ounces.**