



Elizabeth's Buttermilk Ricotta Cheese Dip

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I have a lot of friends who make this ricotta cheese for their homemade lasagna but I have to be honest, since I rarely make lasagna, I only make this cheese to serve as a dip or a spread. It is a very easy recipe and the flavor and texture is so much better than store-bought ricotta that I urge you to make it yourself. It is also a fun experiment to make with kids and an easy way to make a fresh cheese at home.

Makes about 2 cups

Ingredients:

- 3 cups whole milk
- 1 ½ cups buttermilk
- 1 cup heavy cream
- ¼ teaspoon kosher salt

Serving:

- Fleur de sel or Pink sea salt, about 1/8th teaspoon
- 1-2 tablespoons of olive oil
- 1-2 stems of fresh herbs such as thyme, oregano, basil, or herbs de provence
- Zest of ½ lemon or orange
- Favorite crackers or crusty bread

Method:

1. Place milk, buttermilk, cream and salt in a non-reactive heavy duty saucepan over medium heat. Slowly bring contents to a gentle simmer.
2. As the milk solids begin to separate from the whey, give it a stir and bring it back to a gentle simmer.
3. When you see steam rising and solid chunks forming, turn off the heat and let the mixture cool for about 30 minutes.
4. Line a strainer with folded-over cheesecloth or unbleached muslin. (I prefer the muslin which is not as gauzy as cheesecloth and sometimes sold as cheesecloth. If you don't have either, you can use paper towels but will need to change the paper towels.)
5. Using a ladle, spoon the ricotta into the cheesecloth until all of the curds and the whey are in the strainer. Place one layer of the cloth over the cheese. It will strain quickly at first. The longer you let it sit, the drier and more concentrated the cheese will become.
6. Strain cheese for 1-2 hours. I personally like it when almost all of the liquid is strained out and it has the texture of a fresh creamy cheese—not the grainy store bought texture that we are used to.

WHAT'S 4 DINNER?

#RECIPESTHATDISH

7. Taste and make sure you like to consistency and texture. At this point you can place in the refrigerator covered for up to 2 days.
8. Just before serving, place in a decorative bowl and make a well in the center. Sprinkle with salt. Pour in about 1 tablespoon of best quality olive oil. Remove leaves from herbs and sprinkle leaves around the top of the ricotta cheese. Sprinkle zest around the top of the ricotta cheese.
9. Serve with favorite crackers or crusty bread.