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Ricotta

Characteristics:

Ricotta cheese is made from the coagulable material (principally albumin) in the whey obtained in the manufacture of other cheeses, such as Cheddar, Swiss, and Provolone. It was first made in Italy and, therefore, it is classed as an Italian cheese. However, it is now made in all the countries of central Europe and in some parts of southern Europe. It is made also in the United States, principally in Wisconsin and New York. It is sometimes called whey cheese or albumin cheese; other names for it are Ziger or Schottenziger, Recuit, Broccio, Brocotte, Serac, Ceracee, and Mejette.



Cheddar-cheese whey usually contains between 0.2-0.33% of fat, and Swiss-cheese whey contains at least twice as much. In making Ricotta, usually all of the fat is left in the whey, and in the United States from 5 to 10% of either whole milk or skim milk is added. Usually whole milk is added if fresh Ricotta is being made, and skim milk if dry Ricotta is being made. The fat is incorporated in the cheese with the coagulated albumin, and it improves the body, flavor, and food value of the cheese.



The Method of Making:

The manufacturing process should begin soon after the whey is removed from the original cheese, before it has developed excessive acidity; the acidity should not be more than 0.20%. The sweet whey is heated in



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mariovski med

mariovsko meso

mariovsko sirenje

a kettle with a steam jacket to a temperature of 93°C 200°F. (near the boiling point).



Sometimes live steam is injected into the whey. Sour whey or other coagulant is stirred in. Much of the coagulated albumin rises to the surface, and is dipped out with a perforated ladle or removed with a dipping cloth. The curd may be hung in the dipping cloth to cool and drain, or it may be dipped into perforated forms or spread on a screen platform in a vat. To improve the flavor and promote ripening, lactic starter may be mixed in after the curd has cooled to about 38°C 100°F.



From 1 to 1.4 percent or more of salt may be added at this time.



At this stage the curd is moist, grainy, and lacks cohesiveness; it resembles cottage-cheese curd in consistency. If it is to be marketed as fresh or moist Ricotta, draining is continued or the curd may be pressed for several hours in cheesecloth-lined hoops; then it is packed in paper cartons that usually hold 2,25 kg 5 pounds.



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mariovski med

mariovsko meso

mariovsko sirenje



If it is to be marketed as dry Ricotta, the curd is placed in perforated forms about 15 cm 6 inches in diameter and 22,5 cm 9 inches deep, and it is pressed heavily for a longer period. Then it is salted on the surface, if it was not salted earlier, and it is dried in a curing room at a temperature of 38°C 100°F., or slightly higher. Dry Ricotta is suitable for grating.

Approximately 5 kg 5 pounds of fresh, moist curd is obtained from 100 kg 100 pounds of unskimmed cheese whey with 5 kg 5 pounds of added whole milk.



Analysis:

Composition:	%	
	Fresh moist Ricotta	Dry Ricotta
Moisture	68-72	60
Fat	4-10	5,2
Protein	16	18,7
Carbohydrate	3	4
Ash	-	3,6
Salt	1,2	1,5



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