

FOOD52

Homemade Paneer

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Editors' Comments:

A detailed and easy tutorial on how to make paneer at home

Serves 2

- 2 liters fresh whole milk
 - 2 to 3 tablespoons fresh lemon or lime juice
1. Things you will need: 2 deep, heavy-bottomed pans, cheesecloth or muslin, and a wooden spoon.
 2. Heat the milk in a pan over medium heat. Let it come to a gentle boil and stay there for a minute, making sure the milk does not boil vigorously. If it does, reduce the heat and bring the milk back to a gentle boil.
 3. Add one tablespoon of juice and quickly stir it in. At this point, you will start to see small curds in the milk, but no whey. Add another tablespoon of juice and stir. More curds will appear and you will slowly begin to see the greenish whey. Add the last tablespoon of juice and with this, you should be able to see a clear, greenish whey separating from the curds. Switch off the gas immediately at this point. Depending on the acidity of the juice, the amount of juice you require may differ. Start with one tablespoon at a time until you achieve the results.
 4. Once the curds and whey have separated, you'll want to work quickly. Line another pot with double-layered cheesecloth, making sure the cheesecloth is long enough to be bundled up and hung later. Pour the contents of your pot into the cheesecloth to drain the whey and collect the curds. Wash the curds by running them under cold water to remove the lemon taste.
 5. Tie up the cheesecloth in a tight bundle and let it drain for about 30 minutes. Then place weight on the cheese to get it to be flatter and drain out extra moisture. I generally place it between two cutting boards and set a heavy pot on top of them for 1 to 2 hours. Adding too much weight for too long will drain out too much moisture from the cheese, resulting in hard and crumbly paneer.
 6. Wrap your paneer and store it in the fridge for up to a week. I prefer to use it as early as possible.
 7. For use in curries, cut the paneer into evenly size cubes. You might want to trim out any irregular edges to get even cubes.
 8. Note: Lately, I add a good pinch of salt to the milk for more flavor, but it is not essential. Other flavorings like cumin, herbs, and other spices can be kneaded into the curds before draining. Yogurt can be used in place of lemon for those with a sensitivity to citrus. About $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of yogurt should work for this recipe, but it will depend on the quality and sourness of the yogurt.