

The Shtetl Pantry of Your Dreams with The Gefilteria

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Quick and Creamy Farmers' Cheese

Makes 2 pounds

Ingredients:

- 1 gallon whole milk
- ½ cup white vinegar or lemon juice
- 2 tsp salt

1. Pour milk into medium sized, heavy-bottomed soup pot or saucepan. Heat over a medium low flame, stirring frequently to avoid burning milk until bubbly white foam forms on the surface. Remove from flame. If you have a thermometer, remove from flame when milk reaches 180-190 degrees Fahrenheit.
2. Once removed from flame, pour in vinegar (or lemon juice) and gently stir. The milk will instantly begin to curdle. Milk solids will form, separating from the yellowish-whey liquid. Let sit for 15 minutes.
3. While the cheese curdles, drape a large piece of cheesecloth over a colander or large mesh strainer and place in a large bowl (to catch the whey that will drain off). Gently pour or ladle the milk mixture over the cheesecloth to strain out the liquid whey and catch the solid bits of cheese. Run cold water for about five seconds over the cheese mixture, then sprinkle salt. Let drain for at least 10 minutes. Put whey aside for later use.
4. Take each of the four corners of your cheesecloth and tie a knot to wrap up a bundle of cheese. Hang the knot on a hook, ideally over the sink, and let drip for about an hour. You may have to improvise to find a way to hang your cheesecloth if you don't have a hook handy. Hooks on wire hangers work well. Just place a bowl beneath your dripping cheese to catch the whey.
5. After about an hour, open your cheesecloth bundle. If mixing-in herbs, stir them in once you remove from cheesecloth. Pack cheese in a Tupperware container to store in refrigerator or use immediately in another recipe. Farmers Cheese will last about two weeks in your fridge.

Old Country Sour Cream

Makes 1 ½ cups Sour Cream

Ingredients:

- 1 cup heavy cream
- ¼ cup cultured buttermilk

1. Pour the heavy cream and buttermilk into a clean pint or quart sized container with a lid. Seal tightly and shake vigorously about 1 minute.

2. Let jar sit on the countertop, out of direct sunlight, for 24 to 48 hours. The longer it sits, the more sour it will become.

3. When it gets to a level of sour you like (keep tasting!), store in the fridge and use for up to a week. Shake before each use if you see any separation in the jar.

Garlic Dill Pickle Brine Salad Dressing

Ingredients

- ½ cup leftover pickle brine
- 2 tsp olive oil
- 2 Tbsp white vinegar
- 1 garlic clove, minced or pressed
- 2 tsp Dijon mustard
- ½ tsp dried dill
- 1 Tbsp minced shallot

Combine ingredients and shake to incorporate. Taste, adjust seasoning, and store in the refrigerator.

Shallot Brine Salad Dressing

Ingredients

- 1/3 cup leftover shallot brine (see shallot recipe below)
- 2 Tbsp olive oil
- 1 ½ Tbsp tahini
- 1 Tbsp maple syrup
- ¼ tsp kosher salt
- 1/8 tsp freshly ground black pepper.

Combine all ingredients in a jar and shake to incorporate. Store in the refrigerator and shake before each use.

Schmaltz (“Liquid Gold”) and Gribenes

Makes about ¼ cup schmaltz and about 1 cup gribenes

Ingredients

- 1 cup poultry fat and/or skin (about 6-8 oz)
- ¼ cup water (optional)
- 1 small onion (about 4 oz), sliced

1. Using a pair of kitchen shears or a very sharp knife, cut any large pieces of chicken skin into small, about 1-inch, pieces. Place poultry fat and/or skin in a wide, non-stick heavy bottomed pan or cast iron pan, along with water, if using. Turn heat to low. Once a thin layer of liquid has collected on bottom of pan, add onions, if using. Turn heat to medium low and stir regularly to avoid burning or browning. Continue to stir occasionally for about 1 to 1 ½ hours. The more straight fat you’re using, the faster the process will go, and can likely be done after 45 minutes. If you’re using a fatty skin, the process can take longer. Good schmaltz is clear, so adjust heat accordingly and take it slow.

2. When the poultry skins turn a bit brown (but not burnt), remove from heat. Using a fine mesh strainer, carefully strain schmaltz from the chicken skin and onions. Store schmaltz in a glass vessel with a tight fitting lid and keep refrigerated. Schmaltz will keep in the refrigerator for 2-3 months. You can also place in a plastic Tupperware and freeze.

For Gribenes:

3. Pre-heat oven to 400 F. Using tongs, remove chicken skins from the strainer and discard any burnt pieces of onion. If you plan to use gribenes as a garnish, place skins on a baking sheet. Bake for 7-10 minutes, or until puffy and crispy. Remove from the oven and let cool on a paper towel-lined plate. Excess gribenes can be kept at room temperature in an airtight container for a couple of weeks.

Seasoned Croutons and Breadcrumbs

Makes about 1 ½ cups breadcrumbs (or 50-60 croutons)

Ingredients:

- 6 slices stale bread (rye, pumpernickel, challah, etc. — about 6 ounces)
- pinch of salt
- 1 Tbsp caraway seeds or sesame seeds (optional)
- 3 Tbsp olive oil (for croutons only)

For breadcrumbs:

Preheat oven to 400 F. Place slices of bread directly on oven rack to bake for about seven minutes, or until bread is well toasted and completely firm when pressing the middle of the slice. Remove slices from oven and pulse in food processor with salt and caraway seeds (if using), until fine crumbs are formed. If crumbs aren't breaking down finely, spread on a baking sheet and put back in oven another 5 minutes. Remove and pulse again. Let cool to room temperature and store in an airtight container. Breadcrumbs for a good 6 months or longer.

For croutons:

Preheat oven to 350 F. Cut bread slices into bite size squares (1-inch squares or your preference) and place in a bowl. Coat with oil and sprinkle with sesame and caraway seeds, if using. Spread them out on a heavy baking sheet. Let bake for 12-15 minutes, or until croutons dry out, brown and completely crisp up. Keep an eye on them to make sure they don't burn and stir halfway through to ensure even browning. Let cool before use and store in an airtight container for up to 6 weeks.

Quick Pickled Shallots

Makes 1 Quart Pickled Shallots

Ingredients

- 1 pound shallots (or red onions), peeled
- 2 cups white vinegar
- 1 cup sugar
- 3 Tbsp kosher salt
- 2 tsp whole black peppercorns
- 6 bay leaves
- 2 tsp fennel seeds (optional)
- 2-3 sprigs of fresh herbs such as thyme, marjoram (optional)

1. Trim and slice shallots as thinly as possible with a sharp knife. Hand slicing is fine but using a mandolin on the 1/8- inch setting is ideal. The key is to slice as evenly as possible. Once sliced, you should have about 2 cups. Place shallots or red onions in a clean (sterilized, if canning), quart-sized glass jar.

2. Make a spice bundle by wrapping peppercorns, Bay leaves, fennel seeds and herbs (if using) in cheesecloth. Place spice bundle in a small saucepan with vinegar, sugar and salt to make your brine. Bring to a boil, stirring to dissolve sugar and salt. Lower heat and simmer 5 minutes. Remove spice bundle with a spoon and place in jar with shallots if storing in the fridge (discard, if canning). Pour brine over the shallots and spices, making sure brine covers all ingredients and leaving ½ inch headspace.

3. Close lid immediately and let cool to room temperature before placing them in refrigerator. Let shallots sit at least 24 hours before eating. They will last up to 6 months in your refrigerator.