



CRESCENZA

There are various regional versions of this cheese, namely: Stracchino (Lombardy, Italy), Squacquerone (Modena, Italy). It is typically a Northern Italian treat, but cheese makers around the world enjoy fresh cheeses like this. Queijo Fresco from the Azores islands of Portugal is also similar to this. This cheese-making technique is also a good first step into Mediterranean cheeses like Halloumi and Feta

MISE EN PLACE

- Ensure you read the instructions on the rennet that you have purchased.
- Please also read the Rennet Info sheet shared with you to understand more about using rennet.

CRESCENZA (*makes about 600 grams of cheese*)

Recipe by ADITYA RAGHAVAN

4 litres whole, unhomogenized milk (example: Vital Greens milk in Alberta)*

¼ cup buttermilk

Optional: *¼ teaspoon Calcium Chloride, if using homogenized, pasteurized milk. Not needed for non-homogenized milk or raw milk.*

*Rennet***

Kosher salt or Sea salt

**NOTE: Substitute with regular whole, pasteurized and homogenized milk but results may not be as good. If you have access to raw milk, feel free to use that.*

***NOTE: Read the instructions in our Rennet Info sheet.*

- Place a heavy bottomed pot (4-5 quart) inside a larger (10 quart) pot. Pour water in the larger pot and add milk to the smaller pot, then begin to warm the milk using this double boiler setup.

- Add the buttermilk and stir to combine. Bring the milk to 32-33°C over 10-15 minutes. The water temperature will be 3-4° higher than the milk while warming it up, but when you are close to 30°C, you will notice that the two temperatures will become quite close. This is a good sign. If you warm the water too fast, you will over-shoot the milk temperature.
- Once temperature is reached, if adding calcium chloride, dilute ¼ teaspoon in ¼ cup of water. Add the calcium chloride and mix it into the milk.
- Now, dilute the rennet in ¼ cup of water and add it to the milk.
- Immediately stir in an up-and-down fashion 20 times. Then still the milk. Cover with a lid and let it rest, untouched, for 40 minutes.
- **Check for clean break:** After 40 minutes, the milk should have gelatinized and become a wobbly jelly. Using a knife, make a cut and tilt the knife while inside the milk. The place where the cut was made will part open showing smooth, clean edges. If the edge isn't clean or the milk is still liquid, check and make sure you followed the right quantity of rennet. Also check and see if the milk is still warm and nice.
- Cut the curds into 1-inch vertical cubes using a long knife or palate knife. Check the temperature of the curds at this point. If it has dropped below 30°C, gently heat the double boiler to bring the temperature back up. If the temperature has risen over 35°C, remove the pot from the double boiler so that the milk can slowly cool down.
- Wait five minutes after making vertical cuts.
- Now, using a whisk, gently cut the curds by dipping and folding the whisk. Do three to four folds of the whisk inside the pot, more than four if needed, until all ribbons of curds get cut into rough 1-inch cubes of curd. Some curd pieces will be smaller. Do it patiently. It is hard to be very accurate in a home setting, but don't do it in a hurry and shred the curds too much.
- Once the curds are cut remove the whisk and wait 5 minutes.
- You will notice whey rising to the top and the curds sinking. Now, after 5 minutes are up, using a ladle, stir the curds gently, first by just folding them on top of each other. The stirring action should be very gentle. At this stage, all we are trying to do is to separate the curds from each other, as they want to stick together.
- Stir the curds for 15 minutes in a gentle fashion. Then let the curds rest for another 20 minutes.
- While the curds rest, you will notice that they sink to the bottom of the pot.
- After 20 minutes, lift the pot and gently tilt it over a container to collect the whey. Pour the whey, ensuring no curds fall through. If stirred well, all the curds would have settled to the bottom and they won't fall out immediately. Pour whey out until you begin to see the curds. Then stop.
- Using a slotted spoon, or even a ladle, scoop the remaining curds into a colander lined with cheesecloth. You can use any cheesecloth. The netting on the cheesecloth also gives a nice texture to the cheese once formed.

- Once all the curds have been poured into the cheesecloth, let it drain for 30 minutes.
- After 30 minutes, gently lift the curd mass out of the cheesecloth, by gently undressing the cloth. Flip the curd mass back into the cheesecloth lined colander. The cheese will be wobbly and could break easily. Be gentle and careful.
- Let it drain for another 2 hours then flip again. It'll be easier at this point.
- 2 hours after that, you can remove the cheese from the cloth and place in a bowl. Weigh out the cheese and measure 1.5% salt to the weight of the cheese.
- Generously salt all the sides of the cheese. Place it back in the colander without the cheesecloth. The salt will dry out the cheese more. You can place the entire colander, with a bowl under it, in the fridge and let it slowly set overnight. Cover the entire colander with cheesecloth or plastic cling film
- **Day 2:** Your crescenza is ready to be consumed. Cut into wedges and spread over piadina for a delicious breakfast.

PIADINA SANDWICH *(makes 6 flatbread sandwiches)*

Recipe by ADITYA RAGHAVAN

300 g all-purpose flour

160 g whey from cheese making

40 g lard (or use olive oil, if you prefer)

1.5 teaspoon salt

1 teaspoon baking powder

½ box of arugula

100 gm thinly sliced Prosciutto

200 g fresh Crescenza cheese

optional: lemon juice to finish, or balsamic vinegar

- In a small saucepan, heat up whey and lard mixture to about 50°C. Melt all the lard into the whey.
- In a mixing bowl, add the flour, salt and baking powder. Mix well and then create a well in the middle.
- Pour the warm lard and whey mixture into the well and mix the flour to form a rough dough.
- Empty the scraps of dough from the mixing bowl on to a clean work surface and knead for 2-3 minutes, making a smooth, pliable, soft, dough. If doubling the recipe, you might need to knead it longer.
- Rest the dough for 30 minutes.
- Place a pizza stone in the oven and pre-heat to 500 F. If you do not have a pizza stone, you can use a large cast iron skillet. Or simply place a baking tray. Results will be best with a pizza stone.

- Separate the dough into six balls weighing approximately 85 grams each.
- Spread each ball out really thinly and dust with flour.
- Using a pizza peel, or even parchment paper, place the thin flatbread on the peel and quickly put it in the oven over the stone
- Bake for 2-3 minutes. Remove and place on a cutting board. It should have charred bubbles.
- Bake the remaining piadinas in a similar fashion.
- Assemble the sandwich while the flatbread is still slightly warm. First take large chunks of cheese and with a butter knife or spatula, spread it over the piadina. Add thin slices of prosciutto and top with generous handfuls of arugula.
- Garnish with a touch of lemon juice and then fold the piadina over and press. Let the warm bread soften the cheese a little. It won't melt but will be warm and creamy.
- Serve warm.

EQUIPMENT

Heavy bottomed 4-6 quart pot with lid

Heavy bottomed, larger pot about 10 quart, in which the smaller pot will fit inside.

Digital thermometer

Digital kitchen scale

Cheesecloth

Colander

Ladle, slotted spoon, spatulas

Pizza stone or cast-iron skillet

Pizza peel or parchment paper

Cutting board, knives

Measuring cups and spoons