A recipe for home-made cow’s milk mozzarella

You’ll need:

- A large pot
- A large knife
- Rubber gloves
- A colander
- Two large bowls
- A draining spoon
- A cheese cloth
- A thermometer

Note: I’d recommend that you sterilise all equipment before use.

Ingredients:

- 2 litres of full cream unhomogenised milk
- 1ml calcium chloride (measured using a pipette)
- 1 tsp citric acid dissolved in ¼ cup of cold water
- 1 tablet of rennet dissolved in ¼ cup of cold water (bottled or previously boiled)
- Salt
- Ice cubes

Note: The ingredients above make around 300g (650lb) of mozzarella. If doubling this recipe use the same amount of rennet for 4 litres of milk as you would for 2 litres.

Tips:

- Measure your quantities and monitor your temperature carefully – the best mozzarella results from precision. The recipe isn’t too forgiving to giving it your own spin.

- To store your mozzarella for a few days after preparing then be sure to reserve the whey at step 4. You can add the finished mozzarella into the whey to preserve in the fridge. For 2 cups of reserved whey add 1/8 tsp of citric acid.

- If the curd doesn’t stretch easily at step 5 then pop it back into the bowl of hot water for a few more seconds. And, if needed, slightly increase the temperature of the water.

- Don’t throw away the unused whey – it’s highly nutritious and makes the basis of a great protein shake. Add some fruit and blend or add rolled oats and cook.

- Check out You Tube for videos on how to shape the curd into a mozzarella ball – it really takes practice and watching how the professionals do it can give you a head start.
Steps to prepare:

Pour 2 litres milk into a pot. Add calcium chloride & dissolved citric acid. Add a thermometer. Use unhomogenised full cream milk (don't substitute for low fat or homogenised milk). You can start with chilled milk (there’s no need to bring it to room temperature). Pour the milk into the pot then add the calcium chloride and stir in the diluted citric acid. The citric acid must be diluted in bottled or boiled water (you can't use tap water as chlorine destroys the active ingredient. Add a thermometer.

Heat milk, while stirring, to 32C (89F). Remove from heat & stir in diluted rennet. Rest for 25-30 mins. As you heat the milk constantly stir it and keep close eye on the thermometer – you can use a low or high heat so long you turn off the heat when the temperature reaches 32C (89F). When the heat has been removed add the tablet of diluted rennet and stir constantly to disperse. Rest the pot for 25-30 minutes with the lid on. Don’t stir or move the pot during this time.

Make a cut in the curd with a knife. If curds & whey clearly divide cut the curd into 3cm (1 inch) cubes. After 25-30 minutes the milk should’ve set into a gel like consistency. Check the curd by making a small incision with a long knife. If there’s a clear beak between the curds and whey then it’s ready. You can then cut the curd into 3cm (1 inch) cubes.

Stir & heat the curds to 42C (108F). Once firm drain the curds in a colander lined with a cheese cloth. Place the pot back on the heat and bring the curds back up to 42C (108F) while stirring gently. Monitor the heat closely because you don’t want it to exceed 42C (108F). The curds should firm up. Then set up a colander lined with a cheese cloth and add in the curds to drain.

While the curds drain heat a bowl of water to 70C (158F). And prepare another bowl of salted ice water. It should take around 5 minutes for the curd to drain, and during this time you can prepare two bowls of water. One bowl of salted water with ice cubes added – add 200-300g (9oz) of salt for every 2 litres of water. Another bowl of unsalted water heated to 70-80C (158F) – you need enough water to cover the curd that will be added.

Melt a handful of curds in the hot water. Wearing gloves stretch the curd until it is shiny & smooth. First place some of the curd onto the draining spoon and lower the spoon into the hot water. Allow the curds to melt for around 20 seconds while you put on the gloves. Then bring together the curds in the water with your fingers (the rubber gloves should protect your hands from the heat). You’re looking to get one big piece that you can stretch a few times out of the water. Now for the fun part – stretch the dough (this lengthens the proteins).

Once flexible & glossy delicately mould the curd into a round ball (tuck in the ends). Don’t overwork it. After a few stretches your curd should be glossy and flexible. That’s the sign that it’s ready to shape. Carefully mould the mozzarella into a round ball, wrapping it under itself rather than rolling. Work it gently and don’t squeeze or the end result will be tough and you’ll lose moisture. And work quickly to avoid it cooling down. Tuck in the final ends to create your ball. Of course you can make several smaller balls (boccochini) too.

Place the mozzarella ball into the salted ice water. After 10 minutes it’s ready. Happy feasting! Add the finished ball to the ice cold salt water and leave it to rest for 10 minutes. After 10 minutes the mozzarella is ready to eat. Mozzarella tastes best when it’s just been made so be sure to have a plan to use it as soon as you can.