- 12 cups fresh water (3 quarts)
- 6 cups instant dry milk powder
- 1 to 1-1/2 cups white vinegar
- 1/2 teaspoon salt

Heat the water in a very large pot over low heat. Stir in the dry milk powder as the water heats. Heat it gently so the milk won't burn. When the milk is very hot (about 120°), stir in about a cup of vinegar. Stir the mixture up gently. Turn off the heat and allow the mixture to sit for about 10 minutes, don't skip this part. The mixture has to sit for the milk to have a chance to curdle. Now there should be a big clump of white cheese curd in the middle of a pool of clear amber liquid. Look at it to make sure. If the liquid is still milky, then you need to add more vinegar to finish curdling the cheese. Add a couple of spoonfuls of vinegar at a time and stir gently. More of the cheese will curdle and clump up. Continue until all of the cheese is curdled, and the liquid is clear. This liquid is called whey. The white clumps are called curds. You have made curds and whey, just like Miss Muffet.

Now the cheese must be rinsed. Line a strainer or colander with cheese cloth, or a thin cloth napkin, or a clean baby diaper. Get the cloth wet with a little water. Carefully pour the big pot of curds and whey into the strainer. Let all of the whey strain off. Run a little cold water over the curds to cool them down, and to rinse out all of the whey. Squeeze the curds with your fingers to break them up, and rinse them thoroughly. Gather up the cloth around the curds. Squeeze it to remove as much of the moisture as you can. This part takes a few minutes. Be patient, and squeeze the cloth covered ball until it is quite dry.

Now, open up the cloth and transfer the cheese curds to a bowl or container. You will have between 1 and 1-1/4 pounds of cheese curds, or between 3 and 4 cups of firmly packed curd. Stir the salt into the curds.

Ricotta or Cottage Cheese: The cheese you have now will work as ricotta cheese in lasagna, or pretty much any where else. To turn it into cottage cheese, add a little evaporated milk or yogurt to "cream" it and stir to combine. You can divide the mixture in half and make some of each if you want to give them both a try.

There are lots of other things you can do with this curd too. See the Dairy Section for details.