

Trenta-minuto mozzarella

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By **Andria Farrell, CNC Newspapers**



Thirty-minute mozzarella: how to turn a gallon of milk into a ball of cheese, in one easy two-hour class.

White electric stovetop burners equipped with unused ovens, several sink stations and two modern microwaves - an aging home economics classroom. What better setting to make fine, aged, cheese, then a fine, aged, classroom?

Paula Harris began making cheese three years ago. After deciding to take a class, a friend of hers at the After Dark program asked her if she would teach the class in Duxbury. Before she had left for her class on making mozzarella, she was already slotted to teach the class a few weeks later.

Having taught the class several times now, she has it down to a science, and a lesson. Harris, also the co-chair of the open space committee, "loves good cheese," she said, and became interested in the process after joining the Wild Land Trust to save the O'Neil Farm.

The O'Neil Farm is one of the last working dairy farms in southeastern Massachusetts. When the 140-acre farm was being forced to sell, a committee formed to save it. Now the land is a charitable corporation, which must preserve the acreage as open

space.

Harris, who tells the same story at the beginning of every cheese class she teaches, had a special audience last class, O'Neil farm owner, Carl O'Neil, and six of his employees joined the class together to learn how to make mozzarella.

The ingredients for making mozzarella are quite simple, however, the temperature and the handling are what makes milk into cheese. Harris said that when making mozzarella it is important to use pasteurized whole milk. Cheese is a living organism, she said. It is also important to rinse utensils and bowls, in cold water, when making the cheese so not to introduce different stages of bacteria together.

Cheese making is for everyone, from O'Neil and his team, including three men, plus another adventurous male cooker, to fourteen-year-old cheese making sensation, Nina West.

West, whose father is a graduate of the Culinary Institute of America, has her father's special touch. She followed the 30-minute mozzarella instructions precisely, and a half hour later she had a perfect white ball of succulent mozzarella. The young student said she enjoys cooking, and maybe one day will pursue the culinary arts like her father.

Many of the 12 eager cheese makers took the class for fun, and some and to create a bit of their childhood at home. Anne Marie Papandrea grew up in an Italian area in Connecticut, where her family would get fresh mozzarella and ricotta for all their dishes. She said she has a hard time getting good fresh mozzarella and cheeses in the stores

around the area, she thought it would be fun to learn to make it herself.

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