

Butter & Cream

Separate and churn your own butter from fresh milk

DIFFICULTY

Easy

TYPE

One-off batch, repeated regularly

TIME

20–40 min per batch



DIFFICULTY

Easy



TIME

20–40 min



COST

Low



BEST SEASON

Whenever milk is available



FREQUENCY

Regular through lactation

01 Cream separates, then churns

Cream rises naturally given time, or can be separated mechanically — either way, churning simply agitates the cream until the fat clumps together into butter, leaving buttermilk behind.



02 What you'll need

- Fresh milk, or a cream separator for efficiency at volume
- A churn, stand mixer, or even a jar for small batches
- Cold water for washing the butter
- Salt (optional, for flavour and some preservation benefit)

03 Method

1. Let cream rise naturally on fresh milk (several hours to a day, refrigerated), or separate mechanically.
2. Bring cream to a cool room temperature before churning — too cold or too warm both slow the process.
3. Churn (or shake, for small batches) until the fat clumps and separates from the buttermilk.
4. Drain off buttermilk, then wash the butter thoroughly in cold water to remove residual buttermilk, which otherwise shortens shelf life.
5. Work in salt if desired, then shape and store.

04 Troubleshooting

- **Cream won't churn into butter** — usually temperature-related; adjust cream temperature slightly warmer or cooler and try again.
- **Butter goes rancid quickly** — usually insufficient washing, leaving residual buttermilk behind; wash thoroughly in several changes of cold water.
- **Low yield from milk** — cream content varies by breed and diet; goat and some cow breeds naturally give less cream than others.
- **Butter too soft to work with** — chill briefly before shaping if the kitchen is warm.

05 Timing & maintenance

BEST TIME	Any time fresh milk or cream is available.
DURATION	20–40 minutes of active time per batch.
MAINTENANCE	None beyond correct storage afterward.
SIGNS OF SUCCESS	A clean separation of golden butter from buttermilk, with a fresh, clean taste after thorough washing.

06 Tips & variations

PAIRS WELL WITH

- Milking Sheep & Goats
- Cheesemaking Basics

COMMON MISTAKES

- Skipping the cold water wash, leading to butter that spoils quickly
- Churning cream at the wrong temperature, which can take much longer or not work at all

PRO TIP

Don't discard the buttermilk — it's excellent in baking and makes a good addition to pancake or scone batters.