

Basic Instructions

Yogurt must be made from unhomogenized milk. Homogenization bursts the fat molecules of the milk so that a proper set or even coagulation cannot occur.

The milk may be whole, skim or any ratio thereof. Skim milk will give a uniform product; fat milk will have a cream layer on top.

If a custard type yogurt is desired, heating the milk to 195 F is required to destroy enzymes in the milk that will break down the set. Also in some traditions the milk is thickened by evaporation before cooling and culturing (this method requires long attention). Greek yogurt is made by straining the the final product through a cheese cloth to remove the whey.

Warm the milk to 110 F. If you want a thick consistency like store-bought yogurt, raw milk should be heated to 195 F and then cooled back down to 110 F. Unpasteurized yogurt will have a looser, almost drinkable texture. Stir in flavor or sweetener (if desired) while milk is being warmed. Add either pure dairy culture or yogurt from a previous batch. If using yogurt, add ¼ cup for each quart of milk. Thoroughly blend culture and milk. Pour

into containers and set in a warm place without disturbing for 4-8 hours.

For some people the warm place is near their wood stoves. Others use an electric blanket or heating pad. A cooler with a hot water bottle works well too. The temperature should hold steady between 95 F - 110 F. Tarter yogurt is made by culturing longer, milder yogurt is made by shortened culturing time. If there is excessive wheying-off at the end of culturing before refrigerating, either the culturing time or the amount of heat is excessive. Once the culturing time is complete, remove to refrigeration. Yogurt should keep in refrigeration for up to 30 days especially if the milk was heated to 195F.

Plain

- 1 quart milk
- ¼ cup yogurt (or packet of culture)

Vanilla

- 1 quart milk
- ¼ cup yogurt (or packet of culture)
- ¼ cup of sugar (or other sweetener)
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Maple

- 1 quart milk
- ¼ cup yogurt (or packet of culture)
- ¼ cup of maple syrup

Making Yogurt



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Few products enjoy the image of health and purity that yogurt embodies...

A fine yogurt is simply made by culturing milk with acidophilus bacteria for 4-6 hours. It is generally accepted that yogurt was utilized by peoples of warm climates as a way of preserving milk. Acidophilus (acid loving/creating) bacteria convert milk sugar (lactose) to lactic acid, creating an acid environment in which most pathogenic bacteria cannot survive or multiply. The conversion of lactose to lactic acid makes yogurt more readily digested since this conversion which generally takes place in the gut has already taken place. It is also generally accepted that it is beneficial to inoculate our guts with these microbes since they will aid digestive processes, help break down complex foods, generate more beneficial enzymes, etc.

Unfortunately, because yogurt is also the most profitable “Grade A” product on the market, the industrial food system has adopted many practices that make most commercial yogurts a vehicle for recycling dairy waste from other processes. If you read a yogurt container’s list of ingredients there are very few which read: milk and culture. The drive for thickness as a sign of quality,

and the stability needed for shipping and rough handling, has led to addition of ingredients which are unnecessary and unhealthy. For a truly fine yogurt product one is left to either make it themselves or seek out some rather expensive products. The “milk solids” added to most yogurts are retrieved from whey and it is anyone’s guess where the pectin or inulin or guar gum are coming from. Any food product with high-fructose corn syrup should not be consumed (this sugar does not stimulate the production of insulin by the pancreas which signals one to stop eating). With the takeover of most popular yogurt brands by large food companies it is very important to **read the label**.

Yoghurt, yoghurt, yogurt, yohourt are the various words for preparations of milk fermented with either acidophilus bacillus, lactobacillus bulgaricus, or streptococcus lacti. These bacteria separately or in combination will yield a yogurt that has a custard to a kefir-like consistency. Acidophilus yields a custard type coagulation and bulgaric cultures a thick cream set. Milk for yogurt is heated to rather high temperatures in order to kill microorganisms prior to adding the preferred culture as well as to neutralize enzymes in milk that will break down the custard type set over time.

In the Caucasus where yogurt and kefir are believed to originate, yogurt is more often drunk than spooned. It is often thinned with water, chopped herbs such as dill, cilantro, tarragon, parsley etc. are added; then it is drunk before a meal. Dolma are generally served with a sauce of yogurt and chopped garlic. In my career as Chef de Cuisine one of my most sought recipes was Cold Cucumber Soup. I perfected this recipe during my tenure at the Deerfield Inn:

Cold Cucumber Soup

4-6 cucumbers, peeled
2-3 cloves garlic, minced
1T fresh or 1t dried dill weed chopped
1T olive oil
1/2 cup chopped walnuts
salt and pepper to taste
2-4 cups yogurt(bulgaric)

Chop some of the cucumber into fine dice and reserve. Put cucumber, garlic and dill in food processor and pulse til pureed, add walnuts, diced cucumber and oil. Season with salt and pepper. Chill for several hours. Add an equal amount (more or less) of yogurt and combine well, prior to serving.

Clifford Hatch, Upinngil 2007