

How to Make Yogurt



The best yogurt is what you make yourself, out of farm-fresh, unpasteurized milk. If you are using raw milk (preferred), you want to keep from pasteurizing it while preparing it for yogurt. Pasteurization occurs at 140°, therefore, since the prevailing thought is that you have to cook the dickens out of milk, nearly all yogurt recipes say to cook to 140°-160°. Not the case with raw yogurt!

1. Make sure the raw milk you use is procured from a farm using good sanitary measures. You can use cow or goat milk, and it should be as fresh as possible.
1. Heat one quart of raw milk in a stainless pan, on low-moderate heat to 111° F.
2. As you are waiting for the milk to warm, prepare the following:
 - Very clean Yogurt Maker container or mason jar
 - Add 2 tblsp. of live culture organic plain yogurt, or yogurt starter (both are referred to as "starters"). If your yogurt starter has been in the refrigerator or freezer, let it warm to room temperature in the container before adding milk.
3. When the milk is at 111° F, take it off the heat source, then scoop out a cup of milk with a very clean measuring cup (poor clean technique may result in spoiled yogurt). Add the cup of milk to the yogurt starter and whisk in thoroughly, but gently. Add 1/2 of the rest of the milk and stir again, then the remainder and stir again.
 - Mason Jar: Cover mason jar with a lid. Put into a warm place (by vent, oven with pilot light, dehydrator set at 85°, wrapped with a heating pad in a thermal cooler, etc.) where you can maintain the following temperatures for 8 hours:
 - Cows milk: 72°- 86°
 - Goats milk: 86°- 110°
 - Yogurt maker: cover container with lid, add water to the yogurt maker machine to the appropriate fill line, then put container into the machine, cover and plug in.
4. After 8 hours, put undisturbed yogurt in the refrigerator for 24 hours.

Goats milk will be quite thin. To thicken it:

- Strain it through a muslin, cheese cloth or cotton jelly strainer (note: nylon jelly strainers strain too much out). Strain it for 2-8 hours - to desired consistency. Keep the liquid that falls into the bowl! That is whey!*
- Add gelatin: Add a packet of Knox gelatin powder (2 teaspoons) to two quarts (8 cups) of milk, as you're heating the milk up. (No need to "pre-soak" the gelatin in a separate container. Just sprinkle the powder on top of the milk, distributing it as evenly as possible, wait a few minutes, and then whisk it in).
- Powdered milk: add amount to the desired texture. There are many disadvantages to powdered milk. First, it is in stark contrast to the idea of fresh, raw milk! Second, some report it gives it a grainy texture. Third, it is frequently processed with chemicals. It is not something I recommend using, however, it will effectively thicken your yogurt.

Personally, even though you lose much of the volume when the whey is drained out, it is the way I prefer it the most. You will find goat milk to be slightly sour at first, but you quickly acclimate. You can add some coconut sugar or Rapadura to it before serving until you get used to the sour - which is great for the liver!

*Whey is used to reduce the phytic acid in nuts and grains, to ferment (pickle) vegetables, as a sauerkraut starter and as a nourishing soil amendment.

Be sure to keep your yogurt refrigerated as you normally do with yogurt.

Enjoy!