

Yogurt



Photo by Holley Barreto (2020)

Recipe adapted from: epicurious.com and thekitchn.com

Yield: 1 quart

Ingredients:

4 cups whole or 2% milk

3 tablespoons plain yogurt with active cultures (no flavoring or sweeteners)

Equipment: (make sure to clean all equipment well before beginning)

Candy thermometer or instant read thermometer

Medium heavy-bottomed pot or Dutch oven

Wooden or heatproof spoon or scraper

Small bowl

1 cup measure

1 tablespoon measure

Whisk

Lidded container that can hold 1 quart warm liquid (or multiple lidded containers)

Incubator for yogurt: 1 quart thermos, a cooler, a yogurt maker, or towels

Directions:

If using a candy thermometer, attach to pot. Pour milk into pot and place over medium heat. Heat until the milk measures 200 degrees F, stirring occasionally to prevent a skin from forming and the bottom from scorching. Watch closely to make sure it doesn't overflow.

Remove the pot from heat. Stir milk occasionally to prevent skin from forming and let cool until just warm to the touch, between 112 and 115 degrees F. To speed up cooling, place pot in a large bowl filled with ice. If the temperature drops too low, return the pot to medium heat and heat until between 112 and 115.

Place 3 tablespoons yogurt into a small bowl and add about 1 cup of the warm milk to the bowl. Whisk to combine thoroughly. Pour this mixture into the remaining warm milk and stir gently to combine.

The next step, incubation, will vary according to how you're incubating your yogurt. You might need to experiment a bit to see what works best for your set up!

- If using a thermos: warm the inside of the thermos for 10 minutes with hot water. Pour out water and pour in warm yogurt-milk mixture. Secure the lid tightly. Wrap thermos in a towel and set in a place where it will not be jostled or disturbed.
- If using a cooler: pour warm yogurt-milk mixture into container(s) and secure lid(s) tightly. Make sure cooler is in a place where it will not be jostled or disturbed. Place container(s) with warm yogurt-milk mixture in cooler. Either carefully pour hot water into cooler at least midway up the sides of the container(s), or place a few jars or bottles of hot water into the cooler. Close cooler.
- If using a yogurt maker: pour warm yogurt-milk mixture into containers and follow machine instructions.
- If using oven: pour yogurt-milk mixture into lidded container(s) and secure lid(s) tightly. Wrap in towels and place in oven. Turn oven light on (or use proof function) and close oven door.

Whichever incubation method you use, make sure your container is well-insulated so that it maintains a temperature around 110 - 115 degrees throughout incubation. Yogurt will be safe to eat if the temperature drops, but may be looser than you'd like. Also make sure your container is in a place where it won't be disturbed. This could also impact how the yogurt sets.

Let sit for at least 4 hours and up to 10 hours. Check yogurt by dipping a small spoon into it carefully, then tasting. It should be set (no longer very liquid, but a more solid texture) and tart. The longer it sits, the thicker and more tart it will be. The amount of time needed really varies. The first time you make it, check at 4 hours. You may see some whey (yellowy liquid) on the surface of the yogurt and that's fine.

Once the yogurt has set to your liking, pour off the whey if desired. Whisk the yogurt well for the best texture (it also incorporates the whey back into the yogurt if you kept it). Refrigerate yogurt

until cold; if using Thermos, transfer to another container before chilling. Store in the refrigerator for up to 2 weeks.

Note: flavorings can be added to the yogurt after chilling or just before serving. Yogurt can also be strained to make Greek-style yogurt. Line a strainer with cheesecloth and set it over a bowl. Pour yogurt into cheesecloth and refrigerate. Let sit for at least an hour and up to overnight. Discard the whey that drains, stir a bit back in to the yogurt if it got a little too thick, or use the whey in baking or marinades.