

MAKING ORGANIC YOGURT

Making homemade, organic yogurt is by far the most delicious and nutritious yogurt you will ever taste - even more so if you use raw, organic milk. You may use goat's milk or cow's milk. They both culture well, but differently. Let me explain...

Goat's yogurt can be more liquid-like than cow's yogurt. You may want to add a scoop or two of a healthy fiber called "EcoBloom"**, which will help to slightly thicken or emulsify the goat yogurt although it will most likely never be quite as thick as cow's yogurt. Add the EcoBloom powder **before** you add the liquid ProGurt starter* to the milk. A culture starter introduces beneficial bacteria into the milk. The fiber powder will act as a food source for the beneficial organisms responsible for culturing the milk. This extra food source, besides the naturally occurring milk sugar called lactose, inherent in the milk, will ensure that your yogurt is teeming with beneficial probiotic organisms.

If you wish not to add the fiber powder, you may opt to strain or drip the yogurt through a large wire mesh strainer lined with a couple of layers of cheese cloth making sure that you place a bowl beneath the strainer to catch the yellowish liquid called whey. Always allow this dripping method to take place in the refrigerator **after** your yogurt has cultured. This drip method will strain off the whey from the goat yogurt making it thicker. Drip or strain until desired thickness of your yogurt is attained. The longer you strain your yogurt, the less moist it will become and the more "cheese-like" it will be. If you have ever had Farmer's cheese or cottage cheese, then you have an idea of the consistency. Add herbs and spices to this soft cheese and used it as a veggie dip or as a delicious spread. The drip method works for both cow's and goat's yogurt.

After making your first successful batch of yogurt, you may want to make subsequent batches. To do so, take a couple tablespoons of your first batch and transfer it over to fresh milk as the starter for your next batch of yogurt. Another method of transfer, if you used the drip method is to use a couple tablespoons of the yellowish liquid called "whey" (mentioned in the above paragraph) as a starter for a new batch of yogurt. Simply store the whey in a tightly sealed glass jar in the refrigerator to save for future batches. Whey has a pretty long shelf-life so you'll be able to use it as a transfer for at least three or more batches of yogurt. At some point you will notice that that your prepared yogurt and the whey itself will not work. The organisms are no longer alive and active; therefore you will need to start at the beginning steps with fresh ProGurt starter.

NOTE: It is crucial that you wash your hands and scrub under your fingernails thoroughly before you begin making any cultured food. Also, you **MUST** use VERY CLEAN bowls, jars, pots, strainers and utensils! Otherwise, contamination will occur and you will have to begin again.

Now on to the preparation of yogurt...

- 1) Using a tempered glass or stainless steel pot, heat one quart or more of milk (depending on size of yogurt maker or other container) and stir constantly over a medium heat until it reaches 180 degrees. Please do not boil! The milk proteins will be damaged and the taste will be altered. Remove from heat, cover and set aside to cool to 105 –110 degrees. Test the milk by spooning some out of the pot and placing it on your wrist. You will know that the temperature is correct if the milk feels slightly warm. You may wish to run the milk through a fine strainer to remove the film that develops atop the milk as it cools. This will yield a smoother yogurt, but is not a necessary step.
- 2) Remove about a ½ cup of the cooled (yet still warm) milk with a very clean glass measuring cup. If using the fiber powder, dissolve first then add back to the pot of milk. Stir well. If not adding the fiber powder, simply dissolve a heaping 1/8 teaspoon ProGurt starter in the measuring cup then add back to the pot of milk. Stir well.

- 3) Transfer the inoculated milk into a very clean glass jar or jars, leaving about a one inch space at the top of the jar for the yogurt to expand. Seal tightly. Mason jars work very well and are inexpensive and reusable. Please do not use plastic. It leaches chemicals into the yogurt. If using a yogurt maker, use the container(s) that come with your yogurt maker. Hopefully the container is made of glass.
- 4) Place the yogurt in a warm place (80 to 90 degrees is best) or your yogurt maker for 24 hours or longer. The top of your refrigerator is a great spot. Cover the jars with a towel to keep jars insulated. Heat rises off the fridge and the towel holds in that heat. Making yogurt from rice, soy, nut and other milks requires only 8 to 10 hours to culture. ProGurt starter has proven successful with many types of milk.

If you don't have a yogurt maker, your oven or even a cooler are good places to culture your yogurt. Place the jars into a baking dish filled with very warm water and place into the oven or cooler. If using a cooler, cover the cooler with a towel or blanket. If using the oven, simply close the door. A gas oven pilot light will do wonders for the yogurt. A clean, dry thermos will also work well. Just make sure it is extremely clean. First, fill the thermos with hot water and add baking soda or vinegar. Let it sit for at least two hours, then wash with soap and very hot water. Pour the inoculated milk into the thermos and seal tightly.

Using a yogurt maker is ideal. You can purchase one at our online store at: www.culturednutrition.com . Follow the manufacturer's directions for operating the yogurt maker.

- 5) Once your yogurt has cultured for the required time, place it in the refrigerator to chill for at least 6 to 8 hours. The cultures in your yogurt will be active for 2 weeks in the refrigerator. It is best to consume it during this period to receive maximum benefits. Always add fruits, honey and sweeteners AFTER the yogurt has cultured and chilled. We recommend **Therasweet** (see below) as a safe and natural sweetener.

NOTE: Check your yogurt for desired consistency and taste after 24 hours. If not thick enough simply culture for 6 to 8 more hours and check again. Continue to culture until desired taste/consistency is reached. Use a clean spoon for each sampling. The bacteria in your mouth can contaminate the yogurt giving it an undesirable flavor, color and consistency. It is normal for the yellowish liquid called whey to sit atop the yogurt. There is no need to pour off unless you prefer to. Simply stir into the yogurt and enjoy!

To order *ProGurt yogurt starter, **EcoBloom, Therasweet and /or a Euro Cuisine yogurt maker, please visit www.culturednutrition.com or call (877) 773-9229.