



Homemade Yogurt That's Easy, Inexpensive

Try this step-by-step method to making yogurt at home.

About the Author

Tom Meade is a writer, beekeeper and vegetable gardener in Rhode Island. Making your own yogurt with cow's milk, goat's milk or soy milk is a breeze, and the results are as consistent as you want to make them, despite an enormous number of variables in the process.

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A picture-perfect jar of yogurt made at home by author Tom Meade. Like all other fermented foods – including beer, wine, and cheese – you're working with the original fresh liquid and microorganisms that do the work of fermentation, as well as time, temperature and equipment.

Fresh, raw milk from a single animal can vary tremendously from breed to breed, from season to season, and from pasture to pasture, depending on what the animal is eating, says Ricki Carroll, New England's Cheese Queen.

In the Berkshire Mountains of Massachusetts, Ricki founded New England Cheesemaking Supply and wrote the book, *Home Cheese Making*, the text for the basic cheese-making school she operates in her huge kitchen.

To produce consistent fermented dairy products, she teaches her students, it's critical to use clean and well rinsed equipment, and ingredients from known sources. Be scrupulous about watching the thermometer and the clock.

Buying one brand of organic milk from the grocery store produces yogurt that is consistent from batch to batch. Fat-free milk works well. Raw milk also works as long as the animal is free of antibiotics. To make thicker yogurt, add ¼ cup of powdered milk to the liquid milk you use.

You can buy starter bacteria from a cheese supply store or use three tablespoons of organic yogurt with live cultures. Widely available, Stonyfield Farm organic yogurt contains six species of bacteria; other brands of organic yogurt are also available regionally.

Two pieces of special equipment are necessary: a dairy thermometer which costs about \$10, and an incubator or "yogurt maker."

Non-electric yogurt makers, essentially insulated buckets, cost from \$35 to \$48. Electric yogurt makers start at \$15, and one popular model, the Salton YM9 one-quart, recently was on sale at Amazon.com for \$10.

©Tom Meade Step By Step ...

The easy process: Dissolve ¼ cup powdered milk in 4 cups of cow milk. Heat the liquid to 180 degrees F. Cool the milk to 116 degrees F and dissolve the starter, either a package of powdered starter or 3 T fresh yogurt containing live cultures. Keep the mixture covered and at 116 degrees F for six hours until it "sets up" to the consistency of thick cream. Refrigerate your yogurt for up to two weeks, reserving 3 T to start your next batch.

If you're using goat milk, add 1 drop of rennet (available from a cheese-making supplier) to 4 T unchlorinated water, then mix the diluted rennet into the milk, and continue with the cow's milk process.

If you're using soy milk, heat the liquid to 110 degrees F, add the starter, and let it incubate at 100 degrees F until it sets up as yogurt.

For flavored yogurt, mix in honey, maple syrup, or fruit just before serving.