

BULGARIAN YOGURT STARTER

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INSTRUCTIONS

Before You Begin:

- The packet contains 1/4 teaspoon freeze dried yogurt starter. Reserve the second 1/8 teaspoon until you are certain your first batch of yogurt has set properly. Keep the second 1/8 teaspoon of culture in the refrigerator to be used as a back-up in case your original culture needs to be replaced or if you wish to take an extended break from yogurt making.
- **If you wish to use raw milk to make yogurt, please take a moment to read the special raw milk instructions** (page 2) before activating the yogurt culture.
- Following activation of the yogurt culture, you can begin making larger batches of yogurt.
- Whenever possible, we recommend using wooden utensils and glass jars (such as canning jars) when working with cultures. Do not store yogurt in metal containers.
- We do not recommend using Ultra-Pasteurized (aka UHT, Ultra-High-Temperature) milk when making yogurt as it may yield inconsistent results.
- If you are culturing multiple products (e.g. different varieties of Yogurt, Buttermilk, Kefir, Kombucha, etc.) be sure to keep a distance of at least several feet between cultures so they don't cross-contaminate each other. Over time, cross-contamination will weaken the cultures. Cultures covered with tight lids and stored in the refrigerator do not require space between them.
- Do not consume any yogurt which smells, looks or tastes unpleasant.

For more information on making Yogurt and other cultured foods including How-to Videos, Recipes, Ideas and more, please visit our website: www.culturesforhealth.com.

Activating the Yogurt Starter Culture:

1. Heat 1-2 cups of milk to 160F degrees. Allow the milk to cool to 110F degrees.
2. Place 1/8 teaspoon of the yogurt starter in a glass or plastic container. Add the cooled milk and mix the starter into the milk being sure to fully incorporate the yogurt starter.
3. Cover the mixture and incubate at 110F degrees for approximately 5-8 hours. Temperature is critical to successful activation of the yogurt starter. Verify via thermometer that your appliance is incubating the mixture appropriate temperature.
4. Check the mixture after 5 hours to see if it has set when the container is tipped, (the mixture shouldn't run up the side of the container and should move away from the side of the container as a single mass). If it has not yet set, leave it to culture checking it every 30-60 minutes or so until it is set. Occasionally it can take up to 12 hours to activate and set the yogurt starter. Yogurt can be incubated in a yogurt maker, large dehydrator, crock pot or oven if the appliance can be set to and maintain 110F degrees.
5. Once the yogurt starter mixture has set, allow it to cool for two hours.
6. Place the yogurt in the refrigerator for 6 hours to halt the culturing process.

Making Yogurt with Pasteurized Milk:

1. Heat one cup of milk to 160F degrees. Allow the milk to cool to 110F degrees.
2. Place 1 1/2 - 2 teaspoons of yogurt from the initial activation batch in a glass or plastic container. Add 1/2 of the cooled milk to the starter and mix well.
3. Add the second half of the cooled milk to the mixture and mix well.
4. Cover the yogurt and incubate at 110F degrees for 5-7 hours.
5. Once the yogurt is set (when the jar is tipped, the yogurt shouldn't run up the side of the jar and should move away from the side of the jar as a single mass), allow the yogurt to cool for two hours.
6. Place the yogurt in the refrigerator for 6 hours to halt the culturing process.
7. When it's time to make a new batch, place 1 1/2 - 2 teaspoons of yogurt from the previous batch in a cup of new milk and start again. Larger batches can be made by maintaining the same yogurt-to-milk ratio. Yogurt from each batch can be used to make the next batch. Yogurt from batch A is used to make batch B, yogurt from batch B is used to make batch C and so on. To perpetuate the culture, be sure to make a new batch of yogurt **at least once every seven days**. Waiting longer than one week between culturing can weaken and eventually kill the culture.

Making Yogurt with Raw Milk:

Step One: Activate the Starter to Make a Pure Mother Culture

Our cultures are commonly used with raw milk but doing so requires a few extra steps to ensure that a pure mother culture is maintained. If you do not maintain a pure mother culture, the bacteria in the raw milk will slowly kill the yogurt culture and the starter will not perpetuate long term.

1. To make a pure mother culture, heat 1-2 cups of milk to a least 160F degrees and then allow the milk to cool to 110F degrees.
2. Add 1/8 teaspoon of the powdered yogurt starter to this cup of milk, being sure to fully incorporate the starter into the milk.
3. Cover the yogurt starter mixture and allow it to incubate at 110F degrees for 5-8 hours. Temperature is critical to successful activation of the yogurt starter. Verify via thermometer that your appliance is maintaining the appropriate temperature.
4. Check the mixture after 5 hours to see if it has set (when the jar is tipped, the mixture shouldn't run up the side of the container and should move away from the side of the jar as a single mass). If it has not yet set, leave it to culture checking it every 30-60 minutes or so until it is set. Occasionally it can take up to 12 hours to activate the yogurt starter. Yogurt can be incubated in a yogurt maker, large dehydrator, crock pot or oven if appliance can be set to and maintain 110F degrees.
5. Once the yogurt starter mixture has set, allow it to cool for two hours.
6. Place the yogurt in the refrigerator for 6 hours to halt the culturing process.
7. Make a new pure mother culture at least once every seven days by heating milk as directed in step one, mixing in 1 ½ - 2 teaspoons of the current pure mother culture per cup of milk and following steps 2-4 to allow the mixture to culture, refrigerate, etc.

Step Two: Make Raw Milk Yogurt

1. To make a batch of raw milk yogurt, heat one cup of raw milk to 112F degrees. Mix in 1.5 – 2 teaspoons of the pure mother culture. Mix the starter and milk well. You can make larger batches of yogurt by adhering to the same ratio of 1 ½ - 2 teaspoons of yogurt to 1 cup of milk making up to one quart per container.
2. Cover the yogurt and incubate at 110F degrees for 5-7 hours.
3. Once the yogurt is set (when the jar is tipped, the yogurt shouldn't run up the side of the jar and should move away from the side of the jar as a single mass), allow the yogurt to cool for two hours.
4. Place the yogurt in the refrigerator for 6 hours to halt the culturing process.
5. Each batch of raw milk yogurt must use the pure mother culture as the starter culture. Do not try to culture a new batch of yogurt using a previous batch of raw milk yogurt. This will result in a compromised culture and over time your yogurt will no longer culture properly.

TROUBLESHOOTING

- For extensive troubleshooting information, please visit our website: <http://www.culturesforhealth.com/troubleshooting>
- Whole milk makes the thickest yogurt. Yogurt made with low fat milk is likely to be thin and not set well. You will achieve the thicker yogurt using one part cream to three parts whole milk (the higher the cream-to-milk ratio, the thicker the finished yogurt will be). If a very thick yogurt is desired, fully cultured yogurt may be strained through cheesecloth or a tea towel and the resulting whey discarded or used in recipes.
- Temperature is very important to successful yogurt making. We strongly recommend verifying the temperature your yogurt making appliance is maintaining when in use. Temperatures that are too low or too high will damage the culture.
- Be cautious of overly warm temperatures. Temperatures above 112F degrees may cause the yogurt culture to die. If the yogurt mixture separates into curds (solid mass on top) and whey (clear liquid underneath), this may be a sign that the culture was too warm.

RECIPES

Sweetened Yogurt

Mix 1-2 teaspoons sweetener into one cup of Bulgarian Yogurt. Sweetener options include raw honey, maple syrup, agave, Rapadura (or Sucanat), stevia or sugar.

Fruit Flavored Yogurt

Mix one tablespoon all-fruit (sugar-free) jam into one cup of Bulgarian Yogurt.

Vanilla Flavored Yogurt

Mix, 1-2 tsp. sweetener and ½ - 1 tsp. quality vanilla extract into one cup of Bulgarian Yogurt.

Banana Smoothie

- 1 cup Bulgarian Yogurt
- 1 Banana
- ½ tsp. Vanilla Extract
- Sweetener to taste (raw honey, agave, stevia, sugar, etc.)

Add ingredients to a blender and process until smooth. Serve chilled.

Orange Smoothie

- ¾ cup Bulgarian Yogurt
- 2-3 Tbsp. Frozen Orange Juice Extract
- ¼ tsp. Vanilla Extract
- Ice Cubes

Add ingredients to a blender and process until smooth. Serve chilled.

Labneh (aka Yogurt Cheese)

- Bulgarian Yogurt
- Cheesecloth or Tight Weave Dish Towel

To make Labneh, pour the yogurt into the cheesecloth or tight weave towel. Hang above a bowl or jar and allow the whey to drain off for 2-12 hours depending on the thickness desired. Add herbs and seasoning to taste. Delicious when spread on crackers or as a dip for fresh vegetables.