

# MATSONI YOGURT STARTER

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## INSTRUCTIONS

### Before You Begin:

- The packet contains 1/4 teaspoon of 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 (up to a half gallon per container).
- 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](http://www.culturesforhealth.com).**

### Activating the Yogurt Starter Culture:

1. Stir 1/8 teaspoon of the powdered yogurt starter into 1 cup of pasteurized milk. Be sure to fully incorporate the yogurt starter into the milk.
2. Cover the jar with a towel or coffee filter and secure the cover with a rubber band. Do not put a tight lid on the jar.
3. Let the mixture culture undisturbed at 70-77F degrees for **12-48 hours**. Check the culture every 6 hours or so. It is important to pick a location that is naturally warm (e.g. the kitchen) and out of drafts. Ideally, it should be the **warmest location in your home** (up to 78F). If your home tends to be cooler than 70F degrees at night, consider setting the culture on top of a warm piece of electronic equipment (such as a television or cable box) or on a high shelf can also work well. Remember that drafts can affect the culturing process and cause the yogurt not to culture properly. Verify that the chosen culturing location is maintaining the proper temperature; temperatures which are too low or too high can damage the culture.
4. 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), cover the jar with a lid and place the yogurt in the refrigerator for 6 hours to halt the culturing process.

### Making Yogurt with Pasteurized Milk:

1. Stir one tablespoon of yogurt from your initial activation batch into one cup of milk. You can make larger batches of yogurt by adhering to the same ratio of 1 tablespoon of yogurt to 1 cup of milk (e.g. adding four tablespoons yogurt to a quart of milk will yield a quart of yogurt) making up to one half gallon per container.
2. Cover the jar with a towel or coffee filter and secure the cover with a rubber band. Do not put a lid on the jar as the starter needs to breathe to culture properly.
3. Let the mixture culture undisturbed at 70-77F degrees for **12-18 hours**. It is important to pick a location that is naturally warm (e.g. the kitchen) and out of drafts (see above for ideas for keeping the yogurt in the proper temperature range).
4. 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), cover the jar with a lid and place the yogurt in the refrigerator for 6 hours to halt the culturing process.
5. When it's time to make a new batch, place one tablespoon of yogurt from the previous batch in a cup of new milk and start again. Larger batches can be made (up to a half gallon per container) 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 cup of milk to a least 160 degrees and then allow it to cool to room temperature (alternatively you could use a 1 cup of pasteurized milk).
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 with a towel or coffee filter and allow to culture at 70-77F degrees for **12-48 hours**. It is important to pick a location that is naturally warm (e.g. the kitchen) and out of drafts. Ideally, it should be the **warmest location in your home**. If your home tends to be cooler than 70 degrees at night, consider setting the culture on top of a warm piece of electronic equipment (such as a television or cable box) or on a high shelf can also work well. Remember that drafts can affect the culturing process and cause the yogurt not to culture properly. Verify that the chosen culturing location is maintaining the proper temperature; temperatures which are too low or too high can damage the culture.
4. When 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), place a lid on the jar and set the yogurt in the refrigerator for 6 hours to finish culturing. This is your pure mother culture. Be sure to retain at least a tablespoon of the pure mother culture to make your next batch of pure mother culture (see step five).
5. Make a new pure mother culture at least once every seven days by heating milk as directed in step one, mixing in a tablespoon 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, add one tablespoon of the pure mother culture for each cup of raw milk. You can make larger batches of yogurt by adhering to the same ratio of 1 tablespoon of yogurt to 1 cup of milk making up to one half gallon per container. Cover the jar with a towel or coffee filter and secure the cover with a rubber band. Do not put a lid on the jar as the starter needs to breathe to culture properly.
2. Let the mixture culture undisturbed at 70-77F degrees for **12-18 hours**. See above for ideas for finding a location to keep the yogurt in the proper temperature range.
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), cover the jar with a lid and place the yogurt in the refrigerator for 6 hours to halt the culturing process.
4. 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 or cream makes the thickest yogurt. Yogurt made with low fat milk is likely to be thin. 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. Drafts from windows, air conditioners, etc. can affect the temperature where the culture is sitting. Warm parts of the house are generally best (e.g. the kitchen). If your house tends to be cooler than 70F degrees (consider if the temperature drops at night) then choose a spot that stays warmer. Warm spots often include: On top of the refrigerator, on top of a piece of electronic equipment (i.e. television, cable box, etc.), next to a computer, on a high shelf, inside a cube-shaped dehydrator (such as an Excalibur or Sausage Maker brand) set on a very low setting (under 78F degrees). Verify that the chosen culturing location is maintaining the proper temperature; temperatures which are too low or too high can damage the culture.
- In cooler environments, the yogurt will likely take the entire time period (18/48 hours) to culture. Occasionally it will take bit longer. It's okay to leave the yogurt to culture a little longer when necessary. Simply keep an eye on it and transfer it to the refrigerator as soon as it's set.
- Be cautious of overly warm temperatures. Temperatures above 78F 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**

### **Flavored Matsoni Yogurt**

- Sweetener: Mix 1-2 teaspoons sweetener into one cup of Matsoni Yogurt. Sweetener options include raw honey, maple syrup, agave, Rapadura (or Sucanat), stevia or sugar.
- Flavors: Add 1 Tbsp. of sugar-free (all fruit) jam or ½ tsp. high quality vanilla extract.

### **Frozen Yogurt**

The strong taste of Matsoni freezes well making a tasty frozen yogurt.

- 9 oz. Strawberries or other frozen berries: thawed and puréed (or mashed with mortar and pestle)
- 3 oz. Milk
- 2/3 c. + 4 T. sugar
- 1 ½ Tbsp. Vanilla Extract
- 2 c. Matsoni Yogurt

Use a hand mixer to dissolve the sugar in the milk. Add the strawberries and mix. Mix vanilla and yogurt into the milk mixture. Pour into an ice cream maker follow the machine's instructions.

#### Options:

**Honey Frozen Yogurt:** Substitute approximately 1/3 cup honey for the sugar in recipe. It will take a bit longer to dissolve the honey in the milk and you may need to adjust the amount to taste.

**Raw Milk Frozen Yogurt:** Make Matsoni yogurt with raw milk and substitute raw milk for conventional milk.