

Homemade Yogurt

- ½ gallon non-homogenized, gently pasteurized milk
- ½ cup plain yogurt with cultures (read the label to be sure)

Be sure all your utensils and pots are very clean. Yogurt making is basically growing bacteria, but we only want to grow the good kind.

Heat the milk slowly to 175-185°F, either in a crock pot or in a large pot on medium low heat on the stove. Do not allow it to boil. Remove from heat and cool to 115-120°F.

Mix the ½ cup of plain yogurt with 1-2 cups of the warmed milk, then stir the mixture into the whole pot of milk.

Cover, with a digital thermometer in it, and put it in a place with no drafts and where it can maintain 110-120°F heat. For example, sit your pot on an electric heating pad set on medium, wrap with towels or my favorite, a down throw. Monitor the temperature via the digital thermometer and don't stir. Adjust the setting on the electric heating pad if necessary.

Let it incubate for 6-8 hours, then drain through a cloth-lined colander if you want a thicker yogurt. Save the whey for boiling pasta or potatoes, or making biscuits and rolls.

Put into canning jars, small glasses with lids, or a large bowl and refrigerate.

Be sure to reserve a bit of the yogurt to make your next batch!

Stir in fruit, jams and jellies, honey, brown sugar, or maple syrup to eat. Of course, it can also be used with great success in any recipe and in smoothies!

I tested this method of yogurt making with whole milk, skim milk, and with 2%. By far, my preference is the whole milk, not just for its taste, but also for the yield. Because I like a thicker yogurt, I like to drain it a little, but found that draining the skim batch yielded only 4 cups of yogurt, and the 2% batch yielded 6 cups, as opposed to the 8 cups yield from the whole milk. If you don't drain it, you'll have more of a yield. It is still very delicious, but thinner and more watery. In that case, just stir the yogurt before eating it ... just like you do with store-bought yogurt!