

# How to make Yoghurt at home.

While the nutritional value of yoghurt is its high calcium content, protein and potassium, its most beneficial ingredients are live bacteria. These microorganisms are called probiotics, otherwise known as "good bacteria." Probiotics protect against bad bacteria, support the immune system, and create a healthy digestive tract. These active cultures also ferment milk, turning it into rich, creamy yoghurt. While there are many types and flavours of milk yoghurt available in grocery stores, making your own yoghurt is simple.

Yoghurt is cultured milk. It is made by heating milk and combining it with two live cultures—*Lactobacillus bulgaricus* and *Streptococcus thermophilus*. The warm milk creates the perfect environment for the bacteria to grow, thickening the milk to create yoghurt.

The word "yoghurt" comes from the Turkish "yogurtmak," which means "to thicken." It was first made, accidentally, by herders in Central Asia several thousand years ago. They used sheep stomachs to store their milk. The bacteria from the stomach lining thickened the milk into yoghurt.

The basic production of plain yogurt is fairly simple: milk is heated and combined with a starter yoghurt culture, most often some of a batch of yoghurt that is already made. The milk mixture is kept at a warm temperature for at least eight hours, letting those cultures bloom, resulting in creamy yoghurt.

## 5 Ways to Use Yogurt

From breakfast to dessert, there are endless possibilities for adding yoghurt into your daily menu. Here are five different ways to eat yogurt:

1. **With fruit and granola.** Fill a bowl with homemade yoghurt. Add granola, with healthy oats and nuts. Top with fresh fruit, like strawberries and bananas. To sweeten it up, drizzle maple syrup or honey on top.
2. **Smoothies.** Yoghurt elevates any smoothie from a simple, thin fruit blend to a thick and creamy calcium- and protein-rich shake. Blend with fresh fruits and orange or apple juice.
3. **Dip.** Yoghurt can put a healthy twist on a delicious dip. Combine Greek yogurt, mayonnaise, salt, dried onion and garlic, and fresh dill. Serve with carrots, celery slices, and bell pepper slices.
4. **Marinades and sauces.** Yoghurt is a great marinade and sauce for meat. A mint yoghurt sauce is perfect drizzled over a tender rack of lamb. For an Indian-inspired dish, use curry leaves to make tadka and combine with yoghurt to marinate chicken legs and thighs before baking them in the oven.
5. **Frozen yoghurt.** Once you start making your own yoghurt, it's easy to take it one step further to make this healthy, delicious dessert. Combine whole-milk yoghurt with honey and your favourite flavourings, like peanut butter and bananas or frozen fruit. Blend together and place in the freezer.

# Make Your Own Homemade Yoghurt in 7 Easy Steps

Making yoghurt is part cooking, part science experiment. The first time will take a little longer as you learn the steps and remember to monitor the temperatures, but once you get the hang of it, yoghurt making is easy and the result will be just as good as commercial yoghurt. Here is a basic step-by-step guide for a simple yoghurt recipe.

1. **Choose your milk.** The first step in making yoghurt is to choose the milk you want to use: whole milk is the best. You can even use goat's milk if you prefer its taste. The higher the milk fat, the creamier and richer the yoghurt will be. You can also choose between raw milk or pasteurized.
2. **Heat milk.** Your goal is to get the milk to reach 180 F so have a digital cooking or jam thermometer handy to monitor the temperature. Turn your stove to medium heat. Pour the milk into a pan, stirring to evenly heat the milk. Remove from the heat when the milk reaches 180 F.
3. **Cool milk.** Leave it until it has reached 115 F.
4. **Add the starter.** When the milk cools down to 115 F, it's time to add the yoghurt starter. This introduces the initial batch of live cultures that will bloom and grow in the milk. Simply add some of a previous batch of homemade yoghurt. Stir in a spoonful of yoghurt to each jar until fully incorporated into the milk. If making the yoghurt in a large bowl add a couple of tablespoons of yoghurt. Cover.
5. **Incubate.** See above for how to incubate yogurt at home. My preferred method is to make it in a yoghurt maker as it's simple and reliable. (see note at the end)
6. **Cool yoghurt.** After eight to ten hours, remove the yoghurt when it has reached the desired consistency: the longer it incubates the thicker the yoghurt. Whey, the water by-product of milk fermentation, will accumulate on top. Either whisk the liquid back into the yoghurt or gently strain the yoghurt through a cheesecloth or colander to get rid of the liquid if you want a thicker, Greek-style yoghurt. The whey is very nutritious.
7. **Refrigerate.** Place the finished yoghurt into the refrigerator. It will last for up to two weeks. Make sure to save some yoghurt as a starter culture for your next batch. Add flavourings before you refrigerate or when you pull the yoghurt out to enjoy.

## Note

I recommend the Duroic Digital Yoghurt Maker YM2 from Amazon. It has just one large dish and is much better than the little individual pots. You can also use a dish of your own that fits into the yoghurt maker.