

Home Made Yogurt by Donna Haney

Making yogurt is a very simple process, with many variables.

Ingredients for One Quart/Liter of Yogurt

One quart/liter of milk. A starter culture (choose one):

- ¼ cup plain yogurt per quart/liter milk (choose one with live, active cultures, without additives)

or

- a probiotic supplement, enough to provide about 15-30 Billion active strains per quart of milk

or

- commercial yogurt starter (follow package directions for starter to milk ratio, and for incubation temperature and duration)

Using these ratios, your volume may be doubled to 2 quarts/liters, or quadrupled to 1 gallon/4 liters

Method for making yogurt as simple as 1, 2, 3.

- 1.) scald, and then cool the milk to the proper temperature range before adding the culture,
- 2.) add the culture, and mix well,
- 3.) incubate the cultured milk.

Scald the milk using the “Boil” function inside the “Yogurt” program (reached by pressing “Yogurt” and then “Adjust” once); this step is recommended even when using pasteurized dairy milk. Let the milk cool to below 115° F/46°C using a thermometer, or “warm to the touch” method. Setting the inner pot in an ice bath will speed the cooling process, if desired. After the milk reaches the 105-115F range, add an adequate amount of yogurt starter and mix well.

You can incubate yogurt in individual jars, or directly in the stainless steel inner pot (the pot is most convenient when making larger quantities, or when planning to strain the batch for thicker, “Greek style” yogurt). All containers and utensils must be very clean, but a separate sterilization step is not usually necessary.

Incubate the cultured milk for at least a few hours, usually 8-12 hours overnight is ideal, or for certain types of yogurt you may go up to 24 hours. At very high elevations some yogurt may take much longer to set. Taking notes the first couple of times will prove helpful in getting the results you desire.

When the yogurt is set (visibly thicker, often with a clear liquid separating), refrigerate it for a couple of hours, then enjoy.

Now close the lid, “steam release valve” set to “sealing”, Press “Yogurt” and select your time in hours, and let your Instant Pot make yogurt!

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Notes/Options:

- If you incubate your yogurt in jars, you can place them in the inner pot without the addition of any water.
- The Instant Pot lid should be in place during incubation to keep the temperature stable, with the “steam release valve” in the closed “sealing” position. The silicone sealing ring may be in place, or it may be removed if you have concern about scent transfer from having cooked strong-scented foods.
- The fat content of the milk matters: higher fat content results in thicker yogurt.
- The starter culture matters: follow package instructions regarding ratios, or about 15-30 billion viable cultures per quart of milk when using a probiotic supplement powder (capsules should be opened, and discarded). It is possible to keep using dairy milk yogurt indefinitely to restart new batches of yogurt every 7 days.
- Time matters: time to “set” may vary from as little as a few hours to 12 hours. Follow the directions on the package, or if using yogurt or probiotics as a starter you may wish to check every couple of hours to see your results. “Overnight” (8 to 12 hours) works for many people, and keeps your Instant Pot available during the day. Longer incubation may result in a more tart, and more firm result, as the bacteria continue to convert the natural sugars into lactic acid, however too long and the bacteria begin to die off.
- Incubation requires a stable temperature range between approximately 100-110 F for most thermophilic (heat loving) yogurt cultures, this includes most store-bought yogurt, yogurt starters, and probiotic supplements. Culturing temperatures on the higher end of the range, and longer incubation times may yield a more tart tasting, thicker yogurt.
- Extended incubation time (up to 24 hours) may result in a lower percent of carbs/sugars remaining in the yogurt, as the bacteria transform most all of the natural milk sugars to lactic acid; this may also result in the bacteria running out of their “food”, resulting in a spoiled batch if allowed to continue too long. Frequent monitoring towards the end of your planned incubation period is advisable.
- What makes "Greek yogurt" unique? Specific, locally available strains of bacteria culture, coupled with the local milks and traditional methods of preparing yogurt differ throughout the world. Greek style yogurt is known for being very thick; you may find that adding cream or milk solids (dry powdered milk) to the milk before scalding it will result in a thicker yogurt, or you may simply strain off the watery whey for a thicker Greek style yogurt (the whey may be used in smoothies, etc.)
- Making your own yogurt is fun, EASY and can be VERY inexpensive. Most "failures" can be used in smoothies, so it is low risk. Of course if you have a true failure, evidenced by mold or a foul smell, discard, thoroughly clean all equipment, and try again.

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- Some may wonder about energy usage. The Instant Pot is SO energy efficient as to use only about .06 kWh for incubating yogurt for 10 hours, per one very aware Instant Pot user; less than one cent in his area. Your “mileage” may vary.
- There are a variety of milks and yogurts now on the market. Many can be incorporated into home made yogurt with a variety of results.