McCullough’s Yogurt Recipe
Sep 29, 2015 edition

· Makes 1/3 gallon of yogurt from 1/2 gallon of milk. If strained, then it makes a bit more than ¼ gallon of yogurt. The rest is whey.

Recipes, or what to add to my yogurt or do with it?

· Nothing. You’re a purist aren’t you?
· Honey, molasses, etc. You need a surprisingly small amount. It’s easy to use too much.
· Granola, nuts, etc.
· Fruit: berries, apple pieces, etc.
· Side dish or on top of Indian or other spicy dishes, e.g. on chili instead of sour cream.
· Put it on stings or sunburn (I’m guessing).

Equipment

· Three nesting coolers (Fig 1). 1) a cylindrical 1/2 gallon, 2) a somewhat larger rectangular cooler, 3) a still larger rectangular cooler. You need the first cooler to hold the yogurt. The rest are just insulation and you can improvise. In warm climates you can just let it sit in the warm air (100 F works fine). Some people put a container inside their oven set on extremely low or turned off after being warmed up. [Obviously not a plastic container!] My method (below) works for me.
· Double boiler
· Thermometer (e.g. candy thermometer) capable of reading from 120 F to 180 F or more.
· Water bottle, 1 Litre (optional)
· Cheeze cloth (optional)
· Mixing bowl (optional)
· Canning jars or equivalent (peanut butter jars e.g.) to store yogurt.
· (Do not use a vacuum jacketed thermos bottle - they specifically say not to use those with fermenting, presumably because you might crack its vacuum.)

Ingredients

· 1/2 gallon of milk. I prefer whole organic but any milk will work. Skim, 2%, whole, whatever.
· Some natural yogurt with active cultures. I use Chobani brand; any will do as long as it’s active (alive).

Method

· Heat milk in double boiler to 180 F. Takes 22 min.
· When milk reaches 180 F, pour boiled water into 1 L water bottle and place that into cylindrical cooler to warm up the cooler’s insulation. Leave the hot water in there for now.
· Let the milk cool from 180 F to 115 F. Takes 50 min. It’s important to wait until below 120 F otherwise you will kill the culture. Use the thermometer. Too cool and the culture won’t grow fast. A Chobani employee I met on an airplane told me 115 was better than 120 because of a certain heat sensitive bacterium in their culture.
· Pour most of the 115 F milk into the cooler. Save some (a cup) in the top pan of the double boiler, and mix into it a tablespoon to a cup of yogurt. Not sure which is best or if it matters. Blend well. Pour milk+yogurt mixture into the cooler with the rest of the warm milk, seal it in the cooler.
· Place the 1st cooler (with milk+yogurt culture inside) inside the 2nd cooler. In my arrangement I have to place the cylindrical cooler on its side, propped up with its handle, to fit it inside the 2nd cooler. Orient the spout’s hole up high so that the milk doesn’t leak out.
· Place the hot water bottle into the 2nd cooler along with the first cooler. This is an optional step - the idea is to use that hot water for something, not just pour it down the drain.
· Place 2nd cooler inside 3rd cooler and wait 6-18 hours. The longer, the stronger (more acidic).

You now have yogurt!

· Want to strain it? Use the cheese cloth and the bowl. The longer you strain it, the thicker and drier it becomes. Anywhere from a few minutes to an hour or more; your choice. Strain in the refrigerator if it’s going to be hours.
· Dispense your delicious homemade yogurt into glass jars, refrigerate, and eat it throughout the week.
What other advice? what does your lawyer have to say?

- Why don't you just buy commercial yogurt? Because this is better tasting and funner and cheaper and more energy efficient, and you know what's in it.
- Why don't you just use a commercial yogurt maker? Because this doesn't require another gadget. And less clean up per unit of yogurt.
- You can feed the whey to your animals (if they are not lactose intolerant) or use it instead of water in bread recipes. The bread will be thicker than usual.
- You can use your yogurt to make the next batch, but some say after a few generations you might want to return to the store-bought stuff in case your culture might become a little funky or even dangerous.
- Part of the attraction of home-made yogurt is the adrenaline rush of fermentation - will this taste good or make me sick? If the latter, don't blame me, please contact my lawyer; you may have violated my patented bioweapon. Hint: if the yogurt smells like an old sweaty sock, you have made a bioweapon not yogurt. I have done this a couple times with a little yogurt that leaked out of the inner cooler and was left for days in the 2nd cooler. One time it turned vibrant yellow and really stunk: I did NOT taste it. Hot water and a little bleach fixed that.
- Yogurt can be part of an effective weight-loss regimen: allow yourself to eat as much homemade yogurt as you like, in lieu of cookies, candy, etc. If and when you're newly rocking a hot, trim physique, please send me four easy installments of $29.95.
- Do I need to refrigerate it? You enjoy risky behavior don't you? Dude! Just refrigerate it, ok?
- How long does it last? Mine is generally consumed before the end of the week, so beyond 2 weeks I don't recommend.
- What else can I make by fermentation? I do not have an answer for that question. This page is about yogurt making.