

Preserving Traditions Instructor's Guide: Making Yogurt Demonstration



Goals

At the end of the workshop, participants will

- Know how to make their own yogurt from fresh milk
- Have a sample of yogurt with live cultures to use as starter for subsequent batches at home

Logistics

Demo or workshop?	Demonstration
Duration	90 minutes with lots of “wait” time
Maximum participants	Limited only by space
Participants bring	A pint jar with a tight lid
Presenter brings	<p>Milk, starter, and samples</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Starter can be packets of culture (Yogourmet) or existing plain yogurt (2 Tbl per quart of milk; one 6-oz cup will culture up to 6 quarts [1.5 gallons] of milk) • 1 gallon of milk lets 8 people take home a pint or 16 people take home a 1-cup serving • One gallon of milk and one 6-oz container of Danon yogurt is adequate for up to 16 people. • Also bring a quart of finished yogurt and one or more flavorings (jam, maple syrup, honey, etc.)
Equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A pot big enough for all the milk • A cooking thermometer (optional) • A small cup • A large spoon or ladle • Dishes and spoons for sampling • Stovetop or portable burner
Take-home	One to two cups of cultured warm milk that will turn into yogurt when chilled overnight.

Running the workshop

<p>Introduction (5 minutes)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce yourself • Any group business: next meeting date/topic, how to get on the mailing list, paying for class, etc. • Some kind of “getting to know you” activity: each person introduces her/himself, ask who’s ever made yogurt, ask where people live, ask why they’re interested in this topic, etc.
<p>Overview</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2-sentence overview of what we’re doing today: <i>Today I’m going to show you how to make yogurt. Since yogurt has to incubate overnight, I’ll be demonstrating, instead of each person making her own – but I have some for you to sample when we’re done.</i>
<p>Heat the milk (10 minutes)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pour the milk into the pot • Heat over medium (not high) heat, stirring frequently, until the milk reaches 180°. If you don’t have a thermometer, watch for small bubbles on the edge of the pan – but don’t let the milk start to boil. • You may want to assign one participant to stir and watch the temperature and you can talk about yogurt during this time.
<p>Cool the milk (up to 45 mins)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take the milk off the burner and allow to cool to 108-110°. • You may stir the milk to hurry the cooling process; however, the longer the milk stays hot, the thicker it will be. • This is a good time to talk about yogurt in general (see talking points below), let people share their own experience making yogurt, answer questions, etc.
<p>Prepare the starter (1 minute)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spoon out about half a cup of milk from the pot into a cup or glass. • Stir the starter – either powdered or your existing yogurt – into the cooled milk. • When it’s completely combined, pour it back into the main pot of milk and stir thoroughly. • Emphasize that this is not optional!
<p>Incubate (8 hours)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pour the milk into participants’ jars for them to take home. • Now the yogurt must be kept at around 108° for about 8 hours. • Explain options for keeping yogurt warm (see Talking Points)
<p>Chill overnight</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After the yogurt has incubated, it will look somewhat thicker. Put it in the fridge over night to chill and finish thickening. (It will still be runnier than store-bought.)
<p>Taste test (20-30 minutes)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Now bring out the samples! It’s fun to let people make their own yogurt sundaes with different toppings and flavorings. • Let people chat. This is when community starts happening!
<p>Clean up</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask everyone who can stay to pitch in, and you’ll be cleaned up in no time.

Talking points

You may use this as the basis for your introduction or to fill in while nothing interesting is happening on the stove.

Yogurt is a cultured milk product, meaning that like cheese, “good” microorganisms (often called “probiotics”) are introduced into the milk. These probiotics eat much of the lactose (milk sugars) in the milk, giving the yogurt its distinctive tangy flavor.

People who are lactose-intolerant can often eat yogurt; however, people who are allergic to milk probably can’t eat it. Lactose (sugar) intolerance usually shows up as a digestive issue; milk allergies (to the protein casein) can show up as a respiratory or mucus problem or have other effects.

Heating the milk thickens the yogurt. Homemade yogurt will always be a little runnier than store-bought. Store-bought yogurt often has pectin, gelatin, or milk powder added to thicken it.

Yogurt can be made from any kind of milk: whole, skim, raw, cow, goat – even soy or almond milk can be cultured into a yogurt-like product. This can be a good time to talk about raw vs. pasteurized/homogenized milk, if you like.

If you want flavored yogurt, first make plain yogurt and then add flavorings to it. Homemade jam, maple syrup, honey, vanilla, lemon flavoring, and even herbs can be used to flavor yogurt (try lavender and honey!).

Plain yogurt can be strained to make it thicker. Simply line a sieve with a coffee filter and pour the yogurt in. Leave it for a couple hours to make Greek-style yogurt, or leave it overnight to make something closer to sour cream or even cream cheese.

Why doesn’t yogurt spoil when left out over night? We start by pasteurizing the milk to kill all the pre-existing microorganisms (“bugs”). Then we add starter culture – “good bugs.” There are so many more “good” bugs in the yogurt that they quickly out-compete the “bad” bugs that cause spoilage. The good guys eat all the food (lactose) before the bad guys can reproduce enough to spoil the milk.

How do you keep the yogurt warm for 8 hours? There are lots of options – use the one that is easiest and cheapest for you:

- Put the jar(s) into a cooler with something warm:
 - a jar of hot water
 - a hot pack full of seeds/rice/cherry pits you warm up in the microwave. (You’ll probably have to reheat your hot pack a couple times over the 8 hours.)
 - an electric heating pad
- In a pot of warm water kept warm near your wood stove or in the oven with the pilot light on
- An electric yogurt maker

Tips

- This workshop combines nicely with Granola Making to make a 2.5-hour workshop
- Recipe handout for participants is on the next page

Preserving Traditions Recipe: Making Yogurt

Ingredients (can be doubled)

- 1 quart (4 cups) of milk
- Either 1 packet of starter culture OR 2 heaping tablespoons of active-culture yogurt (your own, or Danon plain)

Equipment

- A pot large enough to hold the milk
- A cooking thermometer (optional)
- A large spoon or ladle
- A small cup
- A clean quart jar with a lid



The method

- **Heat the milk:** Heat over medium (not high) heat, stirring frequently, until the milk reaches 180°. This pasteurizes the milk to be sure the only microorganisms will be our starter culture. If you don't have a thermometer, watch for small bubbles on the edge of the pan – but don't let the milk start to boil.
- **Cool the milk:** Take the milk off the burner and allow to cool to 108-110°. You may stir the milk to hurry the cooling process; however, the longer the milk stays hot, the thicker it will be.
- **Prepare the starter:** Spoon out about half a cup of milk from the pot into a cup or glass. Stir the starter – either powdered or your existing yogurt – into the cooled milk. When it's completely combined, pour it back into the main pot of milk and stir thoroughly. (NOTE: This step is critical – don't just pour your starter into the big pot of milk!)
- **Incubate the yogurt:** Pour the cultured milk into one or more jars. Keep the yogurt warm for about 8 hours.
- **Chill overnight:** After the yogurt has incubated, it will look somewhat thicker. Put it in the fridge over night to chill and finish thickening. (It will still be runnier than store-bought.)

Notes

- If you want flavored yogurt, add sweetener and flavoring after the plain yogurt has chilled.
- How do you keep the yogurt warm for 8 hours? There are lots of options – use the one that its easiest and cheapest for you:
 - Put the jar(s) into a cooler with something warm, like a jar of hot water, an electric heating pad, or a hot pack full of seeds/rice/cherry pits you warm up in the microwave. (You'll probably have to reheat your hot pack a couple times over the 8 hours.)
 - Put the jar of yogurt in a pot of warm water kept warm near your wood stove or in the oven with the pilot light on
 - An electric yogurt maker
- If you want to keep your milk “raw,” just heat to 108° and proceed with the recipe – don't heat to 180° first.