

Recipes to Reduce the Plastic in Your Lives

Yogurt & Ricotta Cheese

HOME MADE YOGURT

Crockpot Yogurt

When using a crockpot recipe, you have a choice of whether you initially heat the milk in the crockpot, or on the stove in a different pan. The only difference is the time you spend in the kitchen and the number of pans you have to clean up. You heat the milk for two reasons:

1. to kill any lingering undesirable bacteria in it before adding the good bacteria to it and growing that.
2. to break apart the protein bonds, which allows your yogurt to thicken.

Using the crockpot to incubate the yogurt is advantageous because the thick crockery holds the heat of the yogurt long enough so that the culture has time enough to properly "yog" before cooling

Ingredients

- 1 cup plain whole milk yogurt (this is your "starter") - make sure the yogurt you use says "active culture". Once you make your own yogurt, you can use ½ cup of your homemade yogurt as the starter
- ½ gallon whole milk

Heating instructions for 2 pans:

- Turn your crockpot on high. Be sure to do this *first*, as your crock pot needs to warm up properly – you will use the crockpot in the final phase (see final instructions below).
- Pour all the milk into a pan for heating on your stove. Stir occasionally until it begins to bubble and get frothy (around 185° if you would like to use a kitchen thermometer). Watch your milk to be sure it doesn't bubble over or burn the bottom of the pan.
- Now that your milk has started to bubble, turn off the burner. Keeping the lid on the pan, let the milk cool to about 110 – 115°. You can use an ice bath if you are in a hurry.

Heating instructions for just the crockpot:

- Heat the milk in the crockpot. You will have to experiment with your crockpot for how long it takes. For mine, I used the high setting and it took two hours. Cooling the milk was the same as for the 2 pan method above.

Final instructions to culture the yogurt:

1. Once the milk has cooled to 110°, place your yogurt starter and 1 cup of warm milk in a small bowl and gently whisk together. Now, add the rest of the warm milk to the crockpot and stir.



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2. With the milk and yogurt starter in the crockpot (**now turned off**), place the lid on. At this point, I set my crockpot on a heating pad that I had already determined had a setting for 110° (in my case, the low setting). I also cover the crockpot with a towel.
You don't have to use the heating pad. It will still culture, but it might take the longer time to reach the consistency you want.
3. My heating pad automatically shuts off after a couple of hours, and my yogurt was "done" in 6 hours. Without the heating pad expect 8-12 hours. The longer you let it sit, the tangier your yogurt will taste.
4. When done, remove the towels from the crockpot. Place your crock pot in the fridge and allow the yogurt to set, do not stir or shake until it has set.

If you want "Greek" style yogurt - really thick - you can scoop out the amount you want to convert to Greek style and place it in a sieve lined with either cheese cloth or something equally porous. I used a coffee filter. Suspend the sieve over a bowl, place in the refrigerator and allow the moisture to drip out until it is as thick as you want.

Simple Yogurt in a Pot

Ingredients

- 4 cups milk (whole, reduced fat or fat free)
- a couple Tbsp of yogurt with active culture

Procedure

- Heat milk to 180 degrees, then let cool to 115.
- Once cooled, stir in the yogurt
- Pour the mixture into a glass jar
- Cover with a cloth and set someplace warm for 7-9 hours

If you like your yogurt thicker (aka Greek yogurt), strain it through a cheesecloth lined sieve.

Yogurt-Maker Yogurt

Making yogurt using a yogurt maker is so simple! Even though yogurt makers are made of plastic, it is not single use plastic, and you can avoid many, many, many yogurt containers if you make your own. There are a variety on the market; you also will likely need a double boiler (for initial heating) and a thermometer. Any yogurt maker will come with recipes, here is one:

Ingredients

- 4 cups milk (any type; note that including whole milk and even cream makes it richer if that is what you are looking for)
- ¼ cup powdered milk
- 2 heaping Tbs yoghurt (saved from your last batch)

Procedure

- Measure 4 cups of milk into the double boiler
- Whisk in ¼ cup powdered milk
- Cover to bring the water to a boil, then reduce heat to simmer; stir occasionally

- Measure milk mixture temperature (about 10 minutes after bringing to a simmer) – when it hits around 185°, remove the inner pan holding the milk mixture and set aside to cool; as it cools, stir occasionally with your whisk.
- Cool mixture to about 110°
- Whisk in 2 heaping Tbs of yogurt (saved from your last batch) and then pour into the yogurt machine's storage container, cover and place in the machine. Plug it in. If your yogurt maker does not have a built in timer, just set your own timer for about 7 hours and walk away. The probiotic cultures will do their thing while you do your own things. You can let it go for up to 12 hours, the longer you let it go, the sourer it becomes.
- Remove storage container from the yogurt maker and place in the refrigerator. It will be ready to eat the next day – mix it with your favorite fruit. When my favorite fruit (peaches) is out of season I add a few raisins before eating to sweeten it.

Instant Pot Yogurt

For this you will need an Instant Pot with yogurt accessories. The yogurt accessories consist of 5 yogurt cups with lids and a pressure sterilization rack that fits into the Instant Pot. Again, made of plastic, but avoids single-use. Please note that you can make yogurt in the Instant Pot with or without the accessories, if going without, simply keep it all in the pot to the very end rather than decanting into the yogurt cups.

Ingredients

- ~ 3¼ cups 2% milk
- ¼ c powdered milk
- < ¼ tsp Stevia
- ½ tsp vanilla extract
- ¼ cup yoghurt (saved from your last batch)

Procedure

- Measure milk into Instant Pot
- Whisk in the powdered milk
- Secure the lid on the pot
- Push the YOGURT button, adjust to BOIL

This brings the milk mixture to the correct temperature (185°); this takes about 20 minutes and the Instant Pot will beep when done

- Remove the pot and allow it to cool (whisking occasionally) – this should take about 30 minutes (brings the temperature down to about 110°)
- Once cool, whisk in the remaining ingredients (Stevia, vanilla extract, yogurt)
- Decant the mixture into the accessory yogurt cups, leave off the lids
- Clean the pot and return it to the Instant Pot, adding about 3 cups of water to the pot
- Fit the pressure sterilization rack into the Instant Pot (to hold the yogurt cups), put the yogurt cups into the rack (without their individual lids)
- Secure the Instant Pot lid, push the YOGURT button, and adjust incubation time to 7 HOURS
- The Instant Pot will beep when it is done, remove the yogurt cups, put on their lids and place in the refrigerator. It will be ready to eat the next day.

RICOTTA CHEESE

Homemade Ricotta

This is so ridiculously easy!

Ingredients

- 4 cups milk (whole or reduced fat. You can also use part cream)
- 3/4 tsp kosher salt
- 2 Tbsp white wine vinegar OR lemon juice (use lemon juice if you plan to use ricotta for a dessert)

Procedure

- Combine the milk/cream and salt in a pan.
- Heat to boiling, remove from heat and stir in the vinegar or lemon juice.
- Allow mixture to stand for 10 minutes - it will separate into curds and whey.
- Pour mixture into cheesecloth lined sieve, let drain until cheese is of desired consistency (if you let it get too dry, stir in a little cream).
- It's ready to serve and will keep 4 - 5 days in the refrigerator!



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