

Homemade Turkish Yogurt (Yogurt)

Turkish · Side Dish · Easy · 30 min total · Serves 4

Turkish yogurt is whole milk cultured gently for several hours into a tangy, smooth set that anchors ayran, cacik and most meze. Keep two spoonfuls back as the starter for next week's batch.

Ingredients

- 4 cup whole milk (pasteurized, not ultra-filtered)
- 2 tbsp plain yogurt with live cultures (unflavored starter; the label should say live active cultures)
- 2 tbsp nonfat dry milk powder (optional; gives a thicker, firmer set)
- 2 cup ice (for the cooling water bath)
- 2 cup cold water (to fill the cooling bath with the ice)

Method

1. Whisk the milk powder, if using, into the milk in a heavy-bottomed pot. Heat over medium, stirring often with a heatproof spatula so the bottom does not scorch, until an instant-read thermometer reads 185°F (85°C), about 15 minutes.
2. Hold the milk at 185°F (85°C) for 5 minutes, stirring, then take the pot off the heat. This step denatures the milk proteins so the yogurt sets thick.
3. Set the pot in a sink of ice water and stir gently until the milk cools to 108 to 113°F (42 to 45°C), about 20 to 30 minutes. Cooling too far will leave the culture sluggish.
4. In a small bowl, whisk the 2 tablespoons of starter with about 1/2 cup of the warm milk until smooth, then whisk the mixture back into the pot so it disperses evenly.
5. Pour into clean jars or a lidded bowl and keep at about 105 to 115°F (40 to 46°C) for 6 to 8 hours. Wrap the container in towels inside a cooler with a jar of hot water (replace the water once), or use an oven with only the light on, checking the temperature with your thermometer.
6. Do not disturb it while it incubates. The yogurt is ready when it is set, glossy and tangy rather than just milky, and a spoon leaves a clean edge when lifted.
7. Chill for at least 4 hours until cold and firm. Reserve 2 tablespoons as the starter for the next batch and use the yogurt within 7 days.