



Skim milk, including organic skim milk available in the grocery stores, contains dangerous forms of oxidized cholesterol due to the processing of whole milk into skim milk. If you prefer to drink skim or low fat milk, simply skim the cream from our whole milk, it naturally separates if left undisturbed in the fridge for several hours. I use a small ladle, but have also had success with a turkey baster, to scoop the cream from the milk. This cream is wonderful to use in your coffee, to make butter or ice cream, or to cook with (scallop potatoes, potato leek soup, any basic white sauce, chocolate mouse, etc.)

Yogurt Instructions: (Adapted from the Yogourmet Freeze-dried yogurt starter available through Associated Buyers and your local health food store). I have enjoyed really nice yogurt from both our whole milk (there is a wonderful layer of cream on top) and from our skim milk once I have removed the cream.

1. Slowly heat one quart of milk to 180 degrees F or bring to the boiling point. This step kills some of the naturally occurring bacteria in the milk making a more sterile atmosphere so the types of bacteria you will be introducing have a competitive advantage. This step is not necessary, and it does thwart some of the advantages of the raw milk because you are killing enzymes in the milk. You must warm the milk to at least 108-112 degrees and the closer to 180 degrees you get, the yogurt will be firmer and the flavor will be a bit different. I usually make a gallon of yogurt at a time in a stainless steel pot with a thick bottom. Stir frequently so the milk does not burn.
2. Let cool down to 108-112 degrees F. This takes a while (several hours) unless you keep stirring off the heat. A slight skim forms at the top of the pan of milk which will insulate the milk and keep the heat in. This skim is fine and I just mix it back into the milk, although it is a little clumpy, it tastes fine and I don't notice it in the yogurt. Cooling the milk is important because you will kill the bacteria in the yogurt starter if you mix it with the milk that is at a higher temperature.
3. Dissolve 5 g of starter with a small quantity of lukewarm milk in a cup and then pour back into the quart of milk. Mix well. (This step helps to make sure you are mixing the contents of the starter more thoroughly. I also do this step when I am using my "culture yogurt" as well.)
4. I pour the milk with the mixed starter into wide mouth quart ball jars. I cap them tightly and wrap towels around them and place them in a small Styrofoam cooler with lots of towels. The point is to keep them at a consistent temperature (around 90-100 degrees) for an incubation period. If it is cooler, it will probably take longer. Yogurt machines help master this step and you will probably come closer to the 4 to 4 ½ incubation period if you use one; I have never used one, though, so I can't tell you for sure.
5. Incubate for 4 to 4 ½ hours, or until yogurt has reached the desired firmness. (I usually incubate for more like 8 to 12 hours)
6. Refrigerate to stop incubation.
7. Enjoy. One of my favorite flavorings is homemade strawberry rhubarb jam or homemade crab apple jelly. Another is good old maple syrup.

Note: You can use your own yogurt that you make for the starter for your next batch of yogurt. I usually use a cup to two cups of yogurt per gallon of milk, but I have not researched exactly how much you need; there are many factors involved, I'm sure (age of yogurt, etc.). I continue to use my own yogurt as a culture for 3 or 4 times or so. The yogurt seems to get runnier and the taste continues to grow in tartness after multiple uses. I have also heard of good success from using Stonyfield Farms yogurt for your starter. Good luck!