

Yoghurt & Cultured Dairy

Ferment milk into yoghurt, kefir, and similar products

DIFFICULTY Easy
TYPE One-off batch, repeated regularly
TIME 6–12 hours fermenting



DIFFICULTY
Easy



TIME
6–12 hrs



COST
Low



BEST SEASON
Whenever milk is available



FREQUENCY
Regular, ongoing batches

01 Culture, incubate, chill

Cultured dairy products rely on beneficial bacteria (or, for kefir, a bacteria-yeast culture) fermenting milk at a specific temperature over several hours — a small amount of a previous batch can usually restart the next one.



02 What you'll need

- Fresh milk
- A starter culture (a small amount of live yoghurt, a yoghurt culture sachet, or kefir grains)
- A thermometer
- A means of holding a consistent incubation temperature (a warm oven, an insulated container, or a yoghurt maker)

03 Method

1. Heat milk to just below boiling, then cool to the culture's specified incubation temperature (usually around 40–45°C for yoghurt).
2. Stir in the starter culture thoroughly.
3. Hold at incubation temperature for several hours, undisturbed, until set.
4. Chill thoroughly before eating or further processing (straining for a thicker, Greek-style yoghurt).
5. Save a small amount of the finished batch as starter culture for the next one.

04 Troubleshooting

- **Yoghurt doesn't set** — incubation temperature too low, or the culture wasn't active/live; check both.
- **Runny texture** — normal for some milk types; strain through cloth for a thicker result if desired.
- **Sour or off flavours developing over successive batches** — culture can weaken or become contaminated after many generations; refresh with a new starter culture periodically.
- **Kefir grains not thriving** — check they're getting fed regularly with fresh milk and aren't left too long between batches.

05 Timing & maintenance

BEST TIME	Any time milk is available; a very approachable year-round project.
DURATION	6–12 hours incubation, depending on the culture and desired tartness.
MAINTENANCE	If maintaining a continuous culture (like kefir grains), regular feeding with fresh milk.
SIGNS OF SUCCESS	A clean, set texture (for yoghurt) with a pleasant tang, no separation beyond a little natural whey.

06 Tips & variations

PAIRS WELL WITH

Milking Sheep & Goats

Cheesemaking Basics

COMMON MISTAKES

Using a culture that's no longer active/live

Disturbing the milk during incubation, which can prevent a good set

PRO TIP

Kefir is even more forgiving than yoghurt and ferments at room temperature — a good starting point if you don't want to manage a precise incubation temperature.