

Ree Ann's Homemade Vanilla Yogurt

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1 gallon 2% or whole milk

1 cup powdered milk

2 cup sugar

4 tsp vanilla

1 cup high-quality plain yogurt with live and active cultures (Ree Ann prefers to use Greek yogurt)

(You also need: a cooler that is big enough to fit 5 quart jars, an electric heating pad, a cooking thermometer, 2 towels, and 5 quart jars and lids.)

Plug in the heating pad, place it in the bottom of the cooler, put a dish towel over the heating pad, and turn it on to medium. Close the lid— so it starts to get warm. Next combine milk, powdered milk, and sugar in a heavy-bottom pan or double boiler. Cook, stirring constantly (being careful not to scorch the milk), with a whisk until mixture reaches 185-190 degrees. Then put the whole pot in a sink filled with cool water, to bring the temperature down to 120 degrees. When the temperature is down, add the vanilla. Then put about two cups of the milk mixture in a bowl and add in the yogurt. Stir until smooth. Now put the yogurt/milk mixture back into the pan. Mix. Ladle the mixture into 5 quart jars. Put the lids on the jars. Arrange them in the cooler and put a towel around to fill up the extra space. Leave them undisturbed for five hours. It is best to keep the temperature in the cooler between 90 and 120 degrees. After the five hours check to see if the yogurt is set, if not let it continue to incubate. The yogurt may take up to eight hours. The longer the yogurt incubates, the thicker the yogurt will be. Make sure the yogurt is firm. There may be a little liquid on top (this is called whey) drain it off each time before serving or mix it in for a thinner consistency. Put the finished yogurt in the refrigerator for about 8 hours to cool completely and chill. (This yogurt recipe can be "halfed" or "fourthed", if you desire.)