



# Troubleshooting Yogurt

Yogurt is a fermented milk product and one of the most popular fermented foods in the world. Yogurt is made at home by heating milk, adding a yogurt culture and incubating between 105°F and 115°F for six to eight hours. During this incubation time, bacteria responsible for fermentation convert sugars into lactic acid. This acid causes the yogurt to gel. Yogurt can be stored refrigerated, at or below 41°F, for 10 to 21 days. Consider the following when troubleshooting yogurt.

Problem: Off flavor (tart, sour)	
Cause	Prevention
Bacteria growth from contaminated milk	Use fresh milk and fresh dry milk powder
Bacteria growth from contaminated starter culture	Use a fresh, active yogurt culture
Bacteria growth from environment	Keep container covered during incubation
Too much starter culture used	Follow tested recipe

Problem: Thin yogurt	
Cause	Prevention
Culture is inactive	Ensure incubation temperature is between 105 and 115°F
Incubation temperature too high or too low	
Interfering substances such as detergent not rinsed	Properly cleaned and rinsed equipment

Problem: Mold, yeast	
Cause	Prevention
Use of unclean or unsanitized equipment	Use properly cleaned and sanitized equipment
Extended storage time	Store no longer than 21 days
Mold and yeast growth from environment	Cover yogurt

Problem: Water separation of curds and whey	
Cause	Prevention
Insufficient heat treatment of milk	Decrease incubation time and monitor temperature during heat treatment

