

# YOGURT

*Popularity Growing as Healthy Food & Beverage*



**Yogurt is more popular than ever, thanks to its health benefits, versatility and tart dairy flavor. Production expanded dramatically in the past decade, due primarily to demand for Greek yogurt, which accounts for half of all U.S. yogurt sales. Yogurt drinks – a snack favorite and go-to breakfast beverage – have driven recent growth. California is the nation’s leading milk-producing state and is the second largest producer of yogurt.**

## YOGURT FACTS



Total yogurt production in California in 2017 was 442.4 million pounds, an increase of 12.0% over the prior year.

Yogurt’s name is Turkish in origin; it was initially brought to North America by Turkish immigrants in the 1700’s.



It was first manufactured commercially in Spain in 1919 by Isaac Carasso whose company Danone was named after his son, Daniel. After Daniel moved to the U.S., he began producing yogurt in New York in the 1940s under the Dannon Yogurt label, which introduced fruit on the bottom in 1947.

The three popular varieties of yogurt – Greek, Icelandic and Australian – are all richer and creamier than traditional yogurt due to differences in straining and cooking. Greek yogurt is the more tart and tangy, which makes it ideal in recipes for savory uses.



The health benefits go beyond the protein, calcium, vitamins B-2 and B-12, and potassium; it’s recognized today as a source of probiotics for healthy digestion.

Regular yogurt contains no less than 3.25 percent milkfat, low-fat yogurt contains between 0.5 and 2 percent milkfat, and non-fat yogurt contains no more than 0.5 grams milkfat per serving.



Plain yogurt is unflavored, made from pasteurized non-fat, low-fat or whole milk. Flavored yogurt is sweetened and includes fruit or other flavors. It is not generally used in baking.



### STORAGE & HANDLING

- Store yogurt in a refrigerator set at 38°–40°F in the container in which it was sold.
- If separation occurs, gently stir the liquid back into the yogurt.
- Discard yogurt that has become moldy.
- Freezing yogurt is not recommended.



## FOODSERVICE APPLICATIONS

### Back-of-the-House

Chefs recognize that yogurt is an important part of many regional cuisines, including Mediterranean, Eastern European, Middle Eastern, East Indian and Chinese.

Yogurt is wonderfully versatile. It can be used as a flavorful, calcium-rich addition to dips, dressings, shakes and soups. Yogurt can be substituted for higher fat sour cream, and drained through cheesecloth to make yogurt “cheese.” It’s a nutritious substitute for sour cream on salsa, baked potatoes and soups, and for mayonnaise in almost any recipe as well as in dressings and dips. Chefs are also using it as a meat marinade.

When substituting yogurt for milk in baking, do not add any of the baking soda called for in the recipe unless the recipe’s list of ingredients includes brown sugar, molasses, or honey. In that case, use the amount called for in the recipe.

Yogurt tenderizes the protein in flour, resulting in soft-to-the-bite muffins, pastries or cakes. Its slightly acidic flavor adds a bit of tang. You can prevent curdling when using yogurt in hot dishes by adding the yogurt as late as possible during preparation, heating gradually and stirring gently.

### Front-of-the-House

Yogurt is a popular meal, snack and condiment. As a result, restaurant operators should have it available as long as they have their doors open. At quick-service restaurants, in both occurrences and items, yogurt mentions on menus are up 40 percent in the past year according to Technomic.

Although delicious on its own, yogurt is often topped with granola, fresh orange, dark chocolate, pistachios, fresh pineapple, toasted coconut, hazelnuts, fresh blueberries, honey, strawberries and kiwi.

## WHAT’S TRENDING

### The Healthy Choice

Technomic reports that 87% of consumers consider nutrient-dense yogurt a part of healthy diet. Restaurant operators are capitalizing by creating new trends within the cultured dairy market. In the yogurt category, examples include: flavor mash-ups, snacking options with smoothie drinks and smoothie bowls, smoked yogurt and even “boozy” yogurt drinks. Other growing trends in the category are probiotics and higher nutrient density —adding things like vitamins and high-protein as well as hidden fruits and vegetables.

### On-the-Go with Yogurt

A significant consumer trend is the idea of “portable protein.” Consumers know that protein is what makes them go. The trick for foodservice operators is to provide that “go” on-the-go. Successful operators can prepare a host of ready-to-go snacks or breakfast foods, packaged for fast pick-up and easy opening. Popular examples include: single-serve yogurt and parfaits (hand-scooped yogurt with fruit and granola).

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