

There are probably many different types of yoghurt that can be made at room temperature, but there are 4 main ones:

- Viili, from Finland, is thick and viscous, almost jelly-like, and is likely to fall off the spoon and down your clean T shirt.
- Matsoni, is from the Republic of Georgia on the Black Sea, and is sometimes called Caspian Sea Yoghurt (CSY). It is popular in Japan. It is smooth and creamy and not as viscous as the viili.
- Fil Mjolk comes from Sweden and is also creamy and pourable.
- Piima is from Scandinavia and has a bit of a buttermilk tang.

In the US, you can buy starters for each of these cultures, and you might want to use different ones for varying uses eg. Viili for gelatine based desserts, Matsoni poured over fruit or Piima for a salad dressing.

But here in NZ, if you've been able to find a culture at all, it will have been by word of mouth, what the supplier calls it might not be what it really is, and you won't be entirely certain what you have. At various times, I've had three given to me and they are all different. So, if you get one and like it, you will probably find you can use it for many different things, and if a recipe calls for any one of them, your one will work.

So, how do you make it?

Method 1 – any of them:

- This seems to be how it is usually made. Use a glass jar with a wide mouth and a screw top lid. Label it, so your housemates don't think it's gone off and throw it out.
- Combine about 10-20% of your last batch with 80-90% fresh milk. Stir well, cover with a tissue or coffee filter, and leave on the bench till thick. This could happen as quickly as 6 hours in very hot weather, or take as much as 24 hours in winter. And if you use more starter, it will be ready faster.
- You might want to stir occasionally during the fermenting, to keep your cream mixed in.
- Screw the lid on and store in the fridge.
- Make sure you make a new batch within 4-5 days (before it separates) or before it's all eaten.

Method 2 – mostly for Viili:

- This is the traditional way viili is made in Finland. When it's made this way, it doesn't come out as stringy, which many people think is a plus. However, you do get a layer of milk which is kind of like junket, topped by a thick layer of cream, which is not to everybody's taste.
- The method is mostly the same, with just these changes:
  - Make it in smaller containers, which will each take one serve. A bowl shape is better.
  - Don't stir. Just put a spoonful of starter at the bottom, pour on your milk and leave it.
  - Being in smaller quantities, it won't take as long.