

Get Cultured on Fermented Dairy Foods



What are Fermented Foods?

Fermented foods are made by extensive and controlled microbial growth. During fermentation, “starter cultures” of bacteria, yeast and/or molds convert nutrients like starch or sugar into an alcohol or acid. These live and active cultures can improve food safety and lengthen shelf life. Microbial growth can also enhance taste, texture, digestibility and may help improve nutritional quality. And while they’re topping the trends lists today, it’s estimated that humans have been eating fermented foods for over 10,000 years.¹

Are Fermented Foods Also Probiotics?

Fermented foods may or may not contain live cultures. Probiotics must meet the definition set forth by set forth by the World Health Organization: “Live microorganisms that, when administered in adequate amounts, confer a health benefit on the host.” Because many of the live microbes in fermented foods have not been tested for specific health benefits, they cannot be called probiotics.²



Fermented Foods

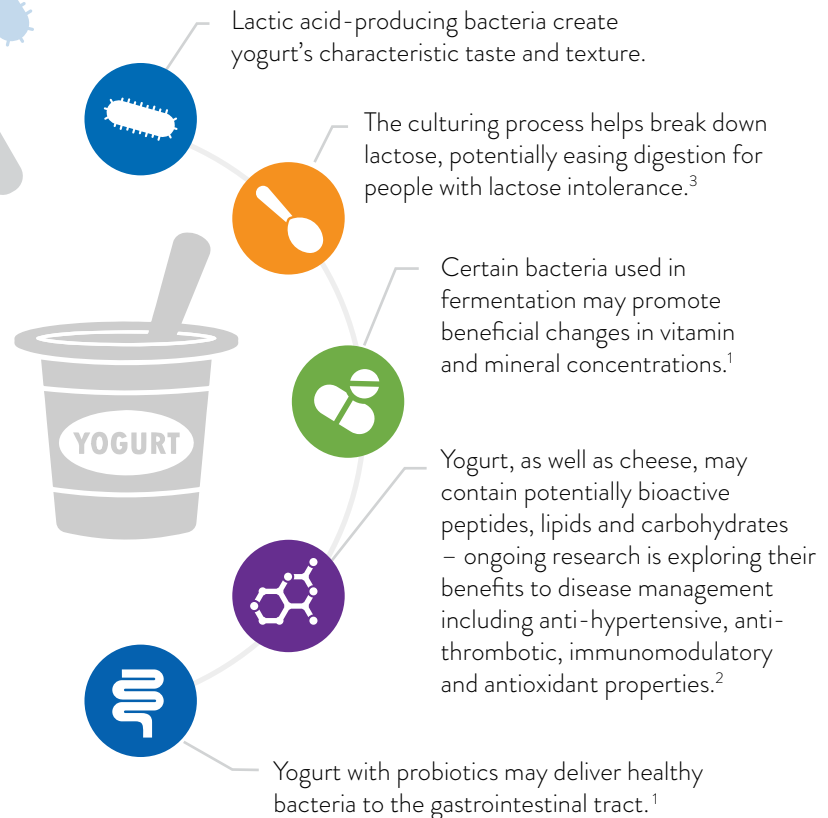
Examples: Natural cheese, tempeh, fresh kimchi, dill pickles, sauerkraut, canned sauerkraut, kombucha, most soy sauces and most wine and beer.



Probiotic Foods

Examples: Yogurt that specifies on the ingredient list that it contains a specific probiotics strain (e.g., B. Bacterium 12); or yogurt containing the live and active cultures L. Bulgaricus and S. Thermophilus.

The Power of Yogurt



The Benefits of Fermented Dairy Foods

A strong and growing body of evidence demonstrates fermented dairy foods (i.e., natural cheese and yogurt) play an important role in health and reduced risk of disease, including:



Digestion: Fermented foods containing live cultures can add beneficial bacteria to the digestive tract and contribute to a healthier microbiota impacting digestion and gut barrier function.^{2,4}



Type 2 Diabetes: Eating yogurt is associated with reduced risk of type 2 diabetes. Eating approximately 1/3 to 1/2 cup a day of yogurt was associated with a 14% reduction in type 2 diabetes risk.^{5,6}



Cardiovascular Disease: Eating at least 5 servings of yogurt per week has been shown to help lower blood pressure, and studies show a positive relationship between eating yogurt and improved cardiovascular health.^{7,8} Research also indicates no association between cheese consumption and cardiovascular disease risk despite its saturated fat content.⁹



Inflammation: The body of research indicates dairy foods like milk, cheese and yogurt are neutral to beneficial in reducing inflammation.¹⁰⁻¹²

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Finding More Ways to Enjoy Fermented Dairy

Fermented dairy foods – like cheese and yogurt – are a delicious way to incorporate dairy foods into your day.



Breakfast

- Add yogurt, kefir or buttermilk to your smoothies, granola or oatmeal (hint: perfect for overnight oats)
- Create a savory breakfast bowl and top it with plain yogurt and shredded cheese
- Make an omelet with your favorite cheese and veggie combo (bonus: top with a heaping spoon of Greek or Icelandic yogurt mixed with hot sauce and a sprinkle of cumin)
- Whip up some quick and easy egg, veggie and cheese muffins



Lunch/Dinner

- Use plain yogurt with a squeeze of lemon in place of mayonnaise on your sandwiches
- Try a yogurt-based salad dressing or make your own ranch dressing using buttermilk
- Top salads with flavorful cheeses
- Sprinkle your favorite cheese combo on Mexican, Greek, Italian, Mediterranean, French and other dishes – from soups, pastas, beans/lentils, casseroles and more
- Cook yogurt-based soups or top your favorite soup, tacos, curries or chili with a Greek or Icelandic yogurt dollop
- Marinade meat, chicken and fish in a yogurt-based sauce



Snacks

- Create your own dips using buttermilk or yogurt as the base
- Create yogurt parfaits by layering yogurt with whole-grain cereal, nuts, chia seeds & fresh fruit
- Make a cheese or yogurt mini-pizza using a whole grain pita or bun (hint: top the yogurt pizza with fruit, nuts and a little honey and top the cheese pizza with veggies)
- Make a fun mix-and-match cheese board with veggies, fruits, your favorite cheeses, nuts, jams and whole-grain crackers
- Cut up cubes of cheese and mix in a small snack-bowl with nuts and pretzels



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