



THE BEVERAGE PEOPLE

Crème Fraîche

Not quite a true cheese, this smooth, creamy cultured dairy product is delicious with sweet foods like fresh fruit and with savory foods like smoked fish. In French cooking, it is often stirred into sauces as well. A couple of tablespoonfuls will quickly transform a simple tomato sauce into a fabulous tomato-crème. It finds use in ways similar to sour cream, although with a milder tangy flavor.

For our recipe, we have selected culture mesophilic Aroma B, primarily for its contribution of buttery aromas. A mixture of four different bacteria cultures, it includes the strongest producer of diacetyl, *Lactococcus Mesenteroides*.

Yields 1 pint.

Ingredients

1 pint heavy whipping cream (not ultrapasteurized)
1/4 tsp. Aroma B Culture, dissolved in 1/4 cup water

Equipment

2-Quart Saucepan
One-quart mason jar
Stainless steel iced-tea spoon (or other long, narrow stainless steel spoon)
Dial Top Thermometer (a second thermometer is helpful, for monitoring the water bath)

Method

1. Pour the cream into the sanitized jar, place the jar in the pot, and add warm water to the pot up to the level of the cream.
2. Heat the pot gently, raising the cream temperature to 86 deg. F. Stir the cream with the iced-tea spoon as you are warming it.
3. Add the Aroma B starter solution and stir gently and thoroughly.
4. Check the water bath temperature and adjust to 86-88 deg F (add ice cubes or hot water, as needed).
5. Place the lid loosely on the jar.
6. Place the jar and pot in a warm place. An empty picnic cooler provides good insulation and will keep them warm enough.
7. Let stand 12 hours.
8. Gently stir your new crème fraîche. It will be about the thickness of creamy yogurt and can be used right away. Chill for a few hours for a thicker, tangier spreadable consistency – about like soft cream cheese.
9. Keep in the mason jar in the refrigerator for up to 2 weeks.

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