**Lebanese Recipes, Part 2**

**Yoghurt from Culture** (from *Lebanese Mountain Cooking*, by Mary Laird Hamady)

This yoghurt will be thick enough to cut with a spoon. A double boiler is very helpful for yoghurt making. Higher heat may be used without danger of scorching the milk. You can always improvise a double boiler by placing a metal bowl inside a larger pot. You will also need a dairy or cooking thermometer and a quart-size jar.

**1 quart milk\***

**1/3 cup instant dry milk** *or* **¼ cup non-instant nonfat dry milk**

**2-3 T. yoghurt, at room temperature**

Fill clean quart jar with hot water. Cover with tight lid. In a heavy pan or double boiler, heat milk over low fire. Use whisk to blend in dry milk thoroughly. (Adding dry milk will make the finished product really thick.) Heat milk to 180°. Stir occasionally. *Be careful not to scorch it*.

Place pan or bowl from double boiler in basin of cold water to speed up the cooling time. Stir until temperature drops to between 115° and 120°. If you have no thermometer, the Old Country method, which is fairly reliable, is to stick in your forefinger. As soon as the milk is cool enough to count slowly to ten, add the culture. Remove pan from cold water and immediately stir in yoghurt. Mix well to dissolve.

Empty hot water from jar and pour in cultured milk. Place wax paper under the cover and screw on tightly. Wrap up jar; keep out of drafts and as warm as possible for 8-12 hours. It will be firmly set in 5 hours but more tartness comes with the longer incubation period. Use whatever method works best for you. I turn on our electric oven to the lowest heat for 5 minutes and then turn it off and let it cool down while am waiting g for the milk to heat. Then I line a large pan with a wool cloth, put in the jars, wrap the blanket around to cover, and put a tight lid on the pan. All of this goes in the oven.

If you have a gas oven with a pilot light, wrap up the jars and stick them in; you’re all set. Also, Styrofoam coolers make excellent yoghurt makers. Line the cooler with padding; or after placing jars of cultured milk in cooler, pack tightly with towels or a blanket and place lid firmly on cooler. A friend of ours used chicken feathers as padding in her Styrofoam container.

Do not disturb yoghurt during incubation period. If it is jostled at all it may not set up properly. Refrigerate yoghurt after it sets up. Remember to save enough yoghurt from each old batch to start another.

Yoghurt can be eaten plain or with meals; if you like it a bit sweeter, drizzle it with honey and/or add some fresh fruit. Enjoy!

\*Depending on the richness of flavor you want, as well as caloric considerations, use anything from skim milk to coffee cream to make yoghurt. We like whole milk the best but tried using skim milk and found it entirely satisfactory, just not as rich and creamy. If you are fortunate enough to live near a dairy farmer, whole raw milk makes fine yoghurt. For raw milk, once it has reached 180°, keep it at that temperature or above for 5 minutes to pasteurize milk. Treat as usual from then on.