

Cultured Butter

Fresh cultured butter is sublime. Choose your favorite cream and culture it lightly or deeply, adding only as much salt as desired. The Proofer maintains the right temperature for the cream culture to produce diacetyl, the delicious flavor component that intensifies buttery flavors.

Yield: Approximately 1¼ C / 300 ml of butter plus about 2 C / 500 ml of buttermilk. The recipe can easily be halved or doubled.

Timing: The cream can be cultured for as little as 12 hours or as long as 48 hours. 1 hour of chilling before churning is recommended. Churning, draining, and washing take about 30 minutes.

Ingredients	By volume	By weight
Heavy Cream*	1 quart / 1 L	1 kg / 32 oz
Plain yogurt, buttermilk, or sour cream starter**	3 T / 50 ml	44 g / 1.5 oz
Salt (optional)	½ tsp or to taste	0.75 g or to taste

*Preferably pasteurized rather than ultra-pasteurized; avoid whipping cream as it contains problematic additives.

**Must contain live cultures.

Equipment: Brød and Taylor Folding Proofer & Slow Cooker (without water tray), culturing jar(s), and butter muslin or fine strainer. Everything that will touch the cream and yogurt should be thoroughly clean and dry.

Note: When using the Folding Proofer to make butter, make sure there is no water in the water tray. The water tray is not needed for making butter; you can remove it from the Proofer or leave it empty. Do not add water because it will affect temperature settings.

Getting Ready. Allow the cream to warm to room temperature. While the cream is warming up, set up the Proofer with the wire rack in place and the temperature at 72 °F / 22 °C.

Culturing the Cream. Mix the live culture yogurt (or buttermilk or sour cream) into the heavy cream. Put it in a covered jar or bowl and place in the Proofer to culture. Check the mixture after 12 hours—it should have a noticeable cultured or yogurt-y aroma and should look thicker than when you started. When ready, it can be churned or allowed to culture longer to develop more flavor.

Tip: If you will be churning butter in jars by shaking them, it is helpful to culture the cream in jars that are half-full.

Chilling the Cultured Cream (optional). For easier churning, the cream can be chilled in the refrigerator for 1 hour or so after culturing. Chilling is recommended if using a food processor to churn the butter in order to avoid melting.

Churning the Butter. Once the cream is cultured, it will need agitation to separate into butter and buttermilk. It can be shaken in a jar (tightly lidded and half-full at most), whipped with a mixer, or processed in the food processor. First, the mixture will turn into whipped cream. After a few more minutes, you will notice solids starting to form (the cream will turn lumpy). Next, it will look a bit like a sponge separating from the liquid. Keep going until the solids have come together into a larger mass and separated completely from the buttermilk. If you are not sure if the butter is fully formed, continue a little longer.

Draining the Buttermilk. Place either a very fine strainer or any strainer/colander lined with butter muslin over a bowl. Pour the butter mixture into the strainer and let the buttermilk drain. This is “real” buttermilk and can be used for baking or pancakes (and also to start your next batch of butter). If you are using the butter muslin, you can gather up the edges and squeeze to get out more buttermilk.

“Washing” the Butter. Remove as much of the remaining buttermilk as possible, so that the butter will not go rancid quickly. Put the drained butter into a bowl and pour about a cup of cold water over it. Mash the butter against the bowl with the back of a spoon to work the water through. Drain and repeat until the water comes through completely clear (it usually takes three to six washes). The cold water washes will also have the effect of cooling and firming the butter—by the final wash you may need to use your hands to knead the butter.

Adding Salt. Adding salt is optional; it will not only affect the saltiness of the butter but also change the flavor. The more salt is added, the less noticeable the cultured flavor will be. Add salt to taste, mixing a small bit at a time through the butter, and taste as you go to avoid adding too much and losing the cultured flavor. If too much does end up in the butter, you can repeat the washing process to reduce it.

Storage. Wrap the butter in wax paper. If you plan to use it relatively quickly, keep it well wrapped in the refrigerator, where it can stay for several weeks. Alternatively, it freezes well.