



Live Farm Fresh Without the Farm™

Living Homegrown Podcast – Episode 38 Making Cultured Butter

Show Notes: www.LivingHomegrown.com/38

This is the Living Homegrown Podcast, episode #38.

Announcer: Welcome to the Living Homegrown Podcast, where it's all about how to live farm fresh, without the farm. To help guide the way to a more flavorful and sustainable lifestyle is your host, national PBS TV producer and canning expert Theresa Loe.

Theresa: Hey there everybody and welcome to episode #38 of the Living Homegrown podcast! I'm your host Teresa Loe and this podcast is where we talk about living farm fresh without the farm through artisan food crafts like canning and fermenting, growing your own organic food and just living a more sustainable lifestyle. If you want to learn more about any of these topics or my online canning courses just visit my website LivingHomegrown.com.

Today's topic is kind of fun it's all about making cultured butter. Now if you have never had that before you are in for a real treat. And if you've never made butter at all then you're in for a really special treat because there is nothing like butter that you make yourself. But then when you take it a step further and make cultured butter it is beyond amazing. And I'm not exaggerating — I went four years only knowing how to make butter but never making cultured butter and making butter is not difficult. But I'd never even heard of cultured butter until just what is it like 2 years ago and the first time I made it I was amazed at how it took something that was already delicious and bumped it up to another level. So if you're going to make



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butter for the first time make this cultured butter and you will never look back.

Before I dive into the actual how to of making cultured butter let me just explain a few of the benefits of why would you want to do this. So aside from the incredible fresh flavor — and there's nothing like it — it's also super easy it's not complicated at all. And you can even do it in stages.

Another reason to make cultured butter is that it's pure. You made it yourself see you know exactly what's in it. Also you get probiotics just like yogurt and it has beneficial bacteria. And you have to keep in mind though that if you heat the butter you're going to lose that — the bacteria can still all die as they don't survive high temperature. But if you're spreading that butter on a piece of bread on a cold piece of bread you're going to get probiotics just like you do with yogurt.

Another benefit of cultured butter is that if you get halfway through the steps and you get busy or lazy and you don't finish you still have something delicious to use and that's creme fraîche. What is creme fraîche? Well it's kind of like a halfway point between yogurt and sour cream. And it can be substituted in a recipe that calls for either one of those things but its flavor and texture is just really superior. It's creamy or it's tastier, it's richer than yogurt but not quite as tangy as sour cream. It's sort of hard to describe but I don't think about it as cultured cream so it's really, really yummy and that's really all you have to know if you ever start making cultured butter.

Another benefit is that you get a byproduct from making cultured butter and that byproduct is buttermilk. And that is super rich deliciousness that is incredible in baked goods or ranch dressing or pancakes. Making your pancake batter using real buttermilk is really fantastic.

So now that I have your attention you probably are wondering alright, alright, I'm in, how do I make cultured butter? Well it's really simple. You're basically taking cream and adding a culture to it and letting it culture at room temperature. And then you whip it up. It's pretty much that simple and

if you have listened to my podcast episode #2 on making yogurt at room temperature without any special equipment this is basically the same thing except that you're using cream instead of milk. So if you want to learn how to make yogurt and a really simple way then go listen to podcast episode #2 of the Living Homegrown podcast.

But what I'm going to walk you through here is how you make buttercream instead of milk. So it's a pretty simple process. Here's the overview: You're going to take a scoop of yogurt or you can also use buttermilk. If you have some fresh buttermilk that has not been ultra pasteurized but I usually use yogurt. So you're going to take a scoop of yogurt and you're going to add it to whole cream. And then you let it sit at room temperature for about 12 to 24 hours. And at this point that you have creme fraîche right there. That's all you had to do.

But you don't stop there. Instead you take that cultured cream and that is now creme fraîche and you use beaters or a standing mixer. And you whip the cultured butter for about three to five minutes. Yep that's all it takes 3 to 5 minutes. And you now have buttermilk mixed with butter. And you just wash out the buttermilk and you're left with the butter. I add salt a little bit of salt.

At this point you're finished so it's not difficult, it's not complicated and it happens in stages over a couple of days. So it's not like you have to set aside a big massive amount of time. You can get kind of a routine down and do this every week or two if you wanted to. And you would always have this incredibly flavored cultured butter.

Alright so if you want to make this you probably are thinking what kind of cream should I use? So I just use any old cream from the grocery store. And you always want to use the best ingredients so that you get the best flavor. See you want good quality ingredients so you want to buy a really good cream. Look for the word heavy cream or whipping cream on the container and it can be pasteurized but you don't want it to be ultra pasteurized. And of course I would recommend that it's organic. Now the reason you don't want ultra pasteurized is that that kind of kills everything

in there and you want the cream to still be able to support the culture that you're going to be putting into it. So don't buy ultra pasteurized but pasteurized is just fine. And most health food stores or Whole Foods type stores do carry the type of cream that you be looking for.

So once you have your cream you're going to want to get your culture started and you can do this with either a few spoonfuls of active plain yogurt, you want to use plain yogurt not a flavoured yogurt. And you could also use buttermilk. So you kind of have three options for starting the culture.

The most common way that I do it is I use a homemade yogurt I make an heirloom yogurt which I talk about in episode 2 and I always start my butter culture with that. It's a mesophilic yogurt that's done at room temperature and I've always gotten great results with it. But any homemade yogurt can work and you can buy homemade yogurt cultures and do that if you wanted to use a homemade yogurt. But you don't have to.

You could use as another option a store bought yogurt. And you can use just regular yogurt that has no preservatives, no gums and the least amount of additives. I would use something that's organic and I would stick to plain yogurt with no flavoring.

The third option is if you use cultured buttermilk. And you can usually find this at a whole food type store or you can use homemade. And of course you want that to be organic as well. The buttermilk can be pasteurized but not ultra pasteurized or it won't work.

Alright so you have everything you need right there. That's all you need is some cream and one of these three choices to start your culture. Pretty simple right? It is really really simple. So let me go through the exact recipe of what you do. And don't worry if you're driving or out exercising while you're listening to them I have all the information on my website and the show notes for this episode. So later you can go and print out the PDF with the recipe and that would be at LivingHomegrown.com/38



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Just go to the show notes for this episode and everything I'm talking about will be right there for you. But it kind of helps at least it does for me if I hear someone walk me through a recipe first before I dive in. And this one's pretty easy so let me explain to you what you need to do. Also this particular recipe will give you about 12 ounces of butter. And you can easily adjust the amount you make just by keeping the ratios of yogurt and cream the same. And that basic ratio is one tablespoon of yogurt or buttermilk for every cup of cream.

So the recipe I'm going to walk you through here is using four cups of cream and I have a quarter cup of yogurt or buttermilk and that's keeping that same ratio. Alright that makes sense okay?

So here's what you need to make a cultured butter. For this recipe I take four cups of heavy cream. Remember it can be pasteurized but not ultra pasteurized. And then I either use a quarter cup of homemade yogurt or a quarter cup of cultured buttermilk or a quarter cup of the store bought plain yogurt. So one of those three things. So in other words you have your four cups of cream and one quarter cup of one of those three things that is going to start your culture.

So the first thing that you do is you place your cream into a 2 quart jar and you add your yogurt or buttermilk to that jar and you stir it up. Once you have it thoroughly mixed you're going to be setting it on the counter without the lid on top and you're only going to be covering it with either a coffee filter or a tightly woven cheese cloth or tea towel that's held on with a rubber band.

And the reason for this is that the culture has to be able to breathe. You want air going in and out of it but you want to keep it covered up so you don't get any bugs or critters going down when they smell the yumminess. So you want to keep it covered up so it stays clean but you want to have air flow going through. After you have your cloth or coffee filter over the top with the rubber band then you're going to set the mixture in a warm spot in the kitchen you want it to be about room temperature or about 75 degrees.



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Now at this time of year that I'm recording this its January so your kitchen could be sort of cold. And if that happens and you know that your kitchen is much colder than 75 degrees, then you can set this jar on top of an area that is warm like on top of your VCR or your cable box or any other electronic device that is just slightly warm and that will be enough to get the culture going.

If the room is too cold or if you don't set it on something that's slightly warm it can take many days for the culture to get going. It really needs some warmth to get kick started. So if nothing's happening when you do this it may be that your room is too cold.

Once you have this jar sitting where it's around 72 to 75 degrees, it will start to culture and you want to check it in about 12 hours to see if it's set. The warmer the room the faster it'll culture so when you're making this in the summertime sometimes it goes really quickly.

You'll know that is cultured when the mixture kind of pulls away from the size of the jar when you tip the jar. If it's not done just keep checking back every 4 to 6 hours. And it can take up to 24 hours if you're at the proper temperature and a little bit longer if your room is colder

Once you know the cream is cultured and it's pulling away from the sides, it kind of the slips away very cleanly from the sides, then you're going to place it into the refrigerator for just a few hours to cool it down and that stops the culturing process.

Now at this point you have made creme fraîche so you could totally stop here and just use it like you would any really rich sour cream. But instead we're going to just keep on going here and we're going to turn this into butter. Also I should say that if you're super busy and you've gotten to this point and you're like oh man, I'm too busy you can keep it in the refrigerator for up to 3 days before you whip it into butter. The culturing processes slows down so much that you'll still get a good flavor if you just make your butter sometime in the next 3 days after you refrigerated it.



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Okay so now we're ready for kind of part 2 of the butter making process. You have your creme fraîche that you created from your cream and your culture and you're ready to turn this into butter. When you're ready to do this you're going to remove that jar from the refrigerator and let it sit at room temperature for 1 to 2 hours just to warm up a bit before you move on. You don't want it super, super cold. It's actually best if its about 60 degrees so I just take it out of the refrigerator for an hour before I do the whipping up process but it's not the end of the world if you take it straight from the refrigerator and whip it up.

What you do is you scrape that cultured butter out of the jar and into a really large mixing bowl or into the bowl of your standing mixer. And the one thing I should also mention here is this next step can get kind of messy so if you have a mixing bowl that is kind of high at like it's deep, it has high sides, that is the best because as you do this some of the buttermilk tends to splatter out while you're mixing and you can end up getting it all over the table, all over yourself. So if you have a shallow bowl it's going to be messy, I have a very deep mixing bowl that I like to use for this process and that's always the best.

Also this next step of actually whipping up the cream into butter really only takes like 3 to 5 minutes. But you have to allow another 10 or 15 minutes or so after you whip it to wash the butter. So I set aside about 30 minutes for this process so that from start to finish from whipping it up to cleaning up the mess I'm completely done. But it's not a huge amount of time.

So you have your mixture in your bowl and you start whipping it up either with your hand mixer or your standing mixer. And as you start whipping it's going to first kind of form whipped cream and then it goes beyond that and you start to get yellow cards the butter mixed with a milky buttermilk. And you will definitely know when you reach that spot because it goes from whipped cream to looking like butter mixed with water down milk.

And at that point you have butter. So what you're going to do now is remove the buttermilk from the butter. And you're going to do this for two reasons. First of all you don't want to have a watery butter you want to



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have butter. But the other reason for removing in the buttermilk is that leaving it in there can cause the butter to spoil sooner than it would normally. So you want to get every bit of buttermilk out of the butter. And the way you do this is to wash the butter.

So the first step is just to drain off that buttermilk so you can save it. And the way I do that is I line a strainer with a piece of cheese cloth and I scrape this butter mixture into that cheese cloth and I let the buttermilk drain out. So I pull all the sides of that cheese cloth up and I kind of squeeze the butter and get as much of that buttermilk out as I can and then I just pour that buttermilk that's the byproduct and I put it into a clean canning jar and I put it into the refrigerator.

And you can use it for making bread or pancakes or waffles it also makes a really good ranch dressing. And there's a lot of other really yummy things you can do with it so don't throw it away. Its good stuff!

And now the next step is to wash out the remaining butter milk out of the butter. And to do this I just place that butter back into a new clean bowl and I start using ice water to wash it. So I pour about a half a cup of ice water into that bowl with the with the finished butter. And I use a wooden spoon or a spatula or what I really love to use is my sauerkraut masher to squish all the butter out. You just keep pressing the butter into the ice water and the ice water will keep getting murkier and murkier as you're getting that last little bit of butter milk out of it.

You do this a couple times so I'll drain off and discard that water buttermilk that I used to wash. It's really not worth saving its all watered down. So I discard that or I'll give it to the chickens. And then I will repeat the washing process about 4 times until I find it as I'm squishing at the water really stays clear. And it takes about 4 or 5 minutes to do this. It's not this huge labor intensive thing, it's actually really fast and really easy. You're just kind of rinsing all that buttermilk out.

After you do that for ice water washing you drain it off and it's at this point that you can add a little pinch of salt if you want to it's up to you. If you like



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your butter unsalted you can leave it out. I usually like to add a quarter teaspoon of sea salt and I sprinkle it over the butter and then I use a big wooden spoon to stir and mix it in. Sometimes it's just easier to use your hands at this point and you can do that too. And then you're all done! You have the most delicious homemade, cultured butter that you will ever taste.

I put the finished butter in a ramekin and I cover it with plastic wrap or a lid and I keep it in the refrigerator. And you can keep it at least a month this way or if you wanted to you could freeze it and butter freezes really well. It keeps for about four to six months. And you can pull it out and let it come back to room temperature and use it anyway you like. So you see, not so hard is it?

I told you it's not difficult but the flavor is out of this world. So if you're interested in giving this a shot then go on over to my website and get the PDF print out of the recipe and all the instructions as well as a transcript for this episode. And I also have photos of what the different stages look like so that you kind of understand what you're headed for as you're going through the different steps. Super easy. So I have everything there for you just go to LivingHomegrown.com/38 and you can download that PDF and get started.

The next step is just to go get yourself some cream and some yogurt and give it a go. And if you do let me know just leave a comment in the show notes and let me know how it worked out for you. Of all the different things I teach making cultured butter always seems to be a real eye opener for people about how cultured food has a little bit more depth of flavor. So I think you really going to like it. So that's it for this week. Until next time just keep working towards living a little bit more local, seasonal and homegrown. I'll see you next time. Take care!

Announcer: That's all for this episode of the Living Homegrown podcast. Visit LivingHomegrown.com to download Theresa's free canning resource guide and find more tips on how to live farm fresh, without the farm. Be sure to join Theresa Loe next time on the Living Homegrown podcast.

