

Plate 21 of *The Nimatnama*, "Soft foods and sherbert," 15th Century Indian

# College of Three Ravens

February 16, 2013, AS XLVII, Barony of Thescorre

## Feast Recipes

#### Head Cook

#### Baroness Katja Davidova Orlova Khazarina

#### Lunch Cook

Baroness Daedez of the Dark Horde Moritu

#### Cauldron Bleu Kitchen Staff & Prep Cooks

Baroness Alison of the Many Isles

Lord Andrew of Thescorre

Lord Avarga Chagadaai

Mistress Bryn ni MacRose

Lord Cadifor Cynan

Baron Devon Adair Bartholomey

Lady Elzbieta Traidenyte

Baron Eric Grenier de Labarre

Lord Padraig Ua Ceileachair

Lord Ruaidri Gabhar

Lord Nishimura Saburou

Lady Tora Yome (Tigger)

and many others

#### Feastbook Proofreader

Lady Dubheasa inghean Dubgaill

Dedicated to the memory of Energizer Jean

I miss you, Mom

#### Menu

#### 1st Course

Lamb samosas

Spinach & kale with basil, mango, & orange
Dal (spiced moong beans)

Carrots glazed with butter and toasted sesame oil
Rice pilaf with saffron, cardamon, & coconut milk

(Plain rice will be available)

Mango sherbert (cold mango drink), grape juice, cold water

#### 2nd Course

Skewered broiled chicken with herbs
Beef roasted in banana leaves
Aubergine burani
Squash sauteed with onions and toasted cumin
Freshly made naan (flatbread)
Chickpea flour flatbreads (gluten free)
Freshly made yogurt
Fig chutney

# 3rd Course Bananas & Medjool dates fried in butter & honey Apricots

All recipes redacted from *The Nimatnama Manuscript of the Sultans of Mandu* (The Sultan's Book of Delights, a late 15<sup>th</sup> century Central Indian text), translated by Norah M. Titley, Routledge, London ©2005.

Please note that all of the untranslated Urdu words are missing their proper diacritical marks.

#### **Baked lamb samosas**

Servings: 6

The method for samosas of tender meat of mountain sheep or of deer: mince (the meat) finely and add turmeric, cumin, fenugreek, coriander, cardamon, and cloves and mix them together. Flavour sweet-smelling ghee with asofoetida. When the ghee has become well-flavored, put the mince into it and leave it so that it becomes well-cooked. Add lime juice and pepper and then put in a quarter of a sir of dried ginger and one sir of chopped onion and remove it ... Having stuffed them with the mince, fry them in sweet-smelling ghee and, when they are to be eaten, sprinkle them with vinegar or lime juice. Serve and eat them.

1 1/4 cups all-purpose flour 8 tablespoons butter, cold, cubed 1/2 teaspoon salt 1 teaspoon sugar 1/4 cup water, cold 1 teaspoon butter, softened 1 pinch asofeotida 1 teaspoon cumin seed 1/4 teaspoon fenugreek seed 1 teaspoon coriander seed 1 large onion, minced 1 pound lamb shoulder, ground or cubed 1/2 teaspoon turmeric 1 teaspoon ginger, ground 1/4 teaspoon black pepper, ground 1/4 teaspoon salt 1 tablespoon butter, melted

Form dough: Mix flour with salt and sugar. Cut in butter until mixture mostly looks like cornmeal. Add just enough water to form a dough, press together into an even flat disk, wrap in plastic wrap, and refrigerate for at least 15 minutes.

Heat butter in a frying pan over medium-high heat, then add the asofoetida and whole spices and bloom them until fragrant. Then reduce the heat to medium-low, add the onion, and cook until at least browned (full caramelization is preferred). Add the lamb, ground spices, and cook until lightly browned. Remove from the heat and let cool for a few minutes.

Preheat oven to 425 degrees. Remove dough from refrigerator and let warm for a few minutes. Roll out thin and cut into at least 8 sections. Add a spoonful of the filling, then pinch to form triangular samosas. Place on a lined baking sheet, brush with melted butter, and bake for 15 to 20 minutes, turning sheet halfway through. Remove and let cool on rack slightly before serving. (Redaction Chris Adler-France ©2013)

Cook's Comment: The original calls for sheep or deer; I chose to use lamb as the closest modern, available equivalent. Although the original recipe has the samosas being fried in ghee, as are most recipes in the Nimatnama, I chose to bake these in the oven so as to provide a little variety and cut down on the amount of fried dishes. I also chose to leave out the lime juice since this mixture is so flavorful, and the chicken dish needed a little oomph.

Per Serving (excluding unknown items): 425 Calories; 31g Fat (66.0% calories from fat); 13g Protein; 23g Carbohydrate; 1g Dietary Fiber; 91mg Cholesterol; 487mg Sodium. Exchanges: 1 1/2 Grain(Starch); 1 1/2 Lean Meat; 1/2 Vegetable; 5 1/2 Fat; 0 Other Carbohydrates.

#### Beef roasted in banana leaves

Servings: 16

Another recipe for clay oven (darka) meat: Make a ditch two gaz deep and one and a half gaz wide. Rub flowers on the inside of the ditch, line it with clay, and put sticks into it. Light a fire and make the clay oven very hot and make the stones lining it hot. Either the flesh of cows or of sheep or of game birds may be used. Wrap the meat in banana leaves and put stones in the ditch oven and put banana leaves on the stones.... Seal it so that nothing runs out of it. This recipe is for one or two cows but put in whatever quantity is required and leave it for a whole night so that it cooks. Burn two or three bundles of firewood on the oven and when it is time to eat the meat, take it out and eat it.

6 pounds beef shoulder or round 1/2 teaspoon salt 1/2 teaspoon black pepper, ground banana leaves safflower oil

Trim any silverskin from the beef, then rub well with salt and pepper. Preheat oven to 325 degrees. Heat safflower oil in a castiron skill over high heat, then brown meat well on all sides. Wrap in banana leaves (if available) then place on a rack in a roasting pan, cover, and roast until rare to medium-rare (135 to 140 degrees), which takes roughly 2 hours for 5 to 6 pounds of meat. (Redaction Chris Adler-France ©2013)

Cook's Comments: This recipe is pretty much the ultimate in "No, all Indian food is really not hot and spicy." The original contains no flavoring other than banana leaves -- I chose to add salt and pepper so it would have some seasoning. I used safflower oil because it has a neutral taste and is the predominant oil used in India today -- and I didn't want to use ghee in yet another recipe.

Per Serving (excluding unknown items): trace Calories; trace Fat (8.5% calories from fat); trace Protein; trace Carbohydrate; trace Dietary Fiber; 0mg Cholesterol; 67mg Sodium. Exchanges: 0 Grain(Starch); 0 Fat.

## Chickpea flour flatbreads

#### Servings: 8

Another recipe for thin bread: Having put water and potherbs to mung pulse or into chickpea pulse, cook it well. Just as dough is made from the flour of stoneground grains for puri bread, so having the dough in the same way, divide it into small portions and cook it.

1 cup besan (chickpea flour) 1 cup water 1/2 teaspoon salt 1 teaspoon parsley, washed, minced 2 tablespoons safflower oil

Whisk together besan, water, and salt in a bowl, cover, and let sit for an hour. Stir in the parsley. Heat a griddle over medium-high heat, brush with oil, and pour on about a quarter of a cup -- enough to make a thin six- to eight-inch pancake-like flatbread. Let cook until lightly browned on the bottom side, then flip and lightly cook the other side. Remove to a plate, brush the griddle again, and repeat with the remaining batter. (Redaction Chris Adler-France ©2013)

Cook's Comment: I was thrilled to discover a gluten-free flatbread recipe in my chosen cookbook for this feast, something that is very rare in European medieval cookbooks.

Per Serving (excluding unknown items): 30 Calories; 3g Fat (99.8% calories from fat); trace Protein; trace Carbohydrate; trace Dietary Fiber; 0mg Cholesterol; 134mg Sodium. Exchanges: 0 Vegetable; 1/2 Fat.

## **Eggplant braised with lentils**

Servings: 10

Another recipe, for preparing aubergine burani: Tamarind, citron, pomegranate seeds, barberries, flavor of oil, scented foods of all kinds, perfumes of all kinds, vinegar, lime juice, cumin, fenugreek, cardamons, cooked beans, flavored oil, kanduri gourd, snake gourd, cloves, date sugar, salt, fresh ginger, figs, yellow lentils, mung pulse, melon, dugh, mustard seeds, garlic, buttermilk, congee, pepper, gourd (kadu).

2 tablespoons tamarind paste

2 large eggplants, peeled and cubed

2 tablespoons coconut oil

1/2 teaspoon cardamom seeds

1 teaspoon salt (more for salting the eggplant)

1 teaspoon black pepper, ground

1 inch ginger root, peeled and minced

1 large lime, juiced

2 tablespoons honey

5 large Medjool dates, diced

1 cup red or yellow/brown lentils, rinsed and drained

1 teaspoon brown mustard seeds

5 cloves garlic, minced

1 cup buttermilk

Peel and cube the eggplant, then place the eggplant cubes in a paper towel-lined colander, salt liberally, and let sit for 15 to 30 minutes. Dry with more paper towels, then place on fresh towels on a plate and microwave at high for 12 to 15 minutes. (This modern preparation method breaks down the cell walls and prevents the vegetable from soaking up oil like a sponge when fried later in the cooking process.)

Heat oil in a cast-iron skillet to medium high, add the eggplant in batches and fry until browned. Meanwhile, place a dutch oven over medium-low heat, add a little oil, then add the seeds and bloom them until fragrant. Add the garlic and ginger, and fry for a minute, then add the eggplant as each batch is done. Add the lentils and other ingredients up through the garlic to the fried eggplant and spices, and stir gently. Add the buttermilk, stir, reduce the heat to low, and let simmer for about 20 to 30 minutes, adding 1/4 cup of water or more if necessary, until lentils are soft. Taste and adjust seasonings. (Redaction Chris Adler-France ©2013)

Cook's Comment: Mid-winter is very late in the season for pomegranates, so I didn't used them for the feast redaction. I substituted honey for the date sugar. I prefer this dish made with red lentils over brown or yellow ones.

Per Serving (excluding unknown items): 81 Calories; 3g Fat (32.3% calories from fat); 2g Protein; 13g Carbohydrate; 3g Dietary Fiber; 1mg Cholesterol; 244mg Sodium. Exchanges: 0 Grain(Starch); 1 1/2 Vegetable; 0 Fruit; 0 Non-Fat Milk; 1/2 Fat; 0 Other Carbohydrates.

#### Fig chutney

Another recipe for pickle (achar): take figs, wild figs, phiphar, jaman fruit, sour corinda, amla seeds, bananas, green chickpeas, roasted chickpeas, and small cucumbers. Put in sourness, sharpness, and salt, and make the pickle.

1/4 cup chickpeas, canned, rinsed and drained
1/2 cup sugar, preferably jaggery
1/2 cup apple cider vinegar
2 cups figs, washed, stemmed, chopped
1 large onion, peeled and chopped
1/2 Cup raisins
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon brown mustard seeds
1 teaspoon cinnamon, preferably Vietnamese/Saigon
1 tablespoon safflower oil
1/2 teaspoon ground ginger

Soak raisins and figs in hot water for about five minutes to soften, then drain. Heat oven to 400 degrees and toast the chickpeas on a baking sheet for about 30 minutes. Let cool and then grind in a spice grinder. Heat oil in a saucepan over medium heat, add mustard seeds and let them pop (to become toasty), then add the onions and cook until softened. Add the remaining ingredients, bring to a boil, then reduce and let simmer for about an hour, stirring occasionally to prevent sticking. (Place pot over a heat diffuser, if you have one.) (Redaction Chris Adler-France ©2013)

Cook's Comment: This recipe is very much conjecture, based on some of the named ingredients in the original recipe and similar ones in modern Indian chutneys that do not contain hot peppers or other New World ingredients. it's definitely not a true redaction, but I wanted to create something that was reasonably inspired by what was served in period rather than just defaulting to a modern jarred chutneys or relishes.

Per Serving (excluding unknown items): 1159 Calories; 16g Fat (11.6% calories from fat); 10g Protein; 266g Carbohydrate; 22g Dietary Fiber; 0mg Cholesterol; 1264mg Sodium. Exchanges: 1 Grain(Starch); 1 1/2 Vegetable; 9 1/2 Fruit; 3 Fat; 6 1/2 Other Carbohydrates.

## Fried bananas & dates

Servings: 8

Another recipe for ghee: Put bananas and dates into ghee. Boil the ghee, strain it, and add date sugar and eat this ghee with food.

3 large bananas 6 large Medjool dates 2 tablespoons ghee 1 tablespoon sugar or honey

Peel and slice bananas into 1-inch sections. Slice dates in thirds lengthwise and remove pits. Heat ghee in a frying pan over medium heat, then add bananas and dates. Fry for a few minutes, stirring frequently to prevent sticking, then add the sugar and continue stirring until lightly browned. Serve immediately. (Redaction Chris Adler-France ©2013)

Per Serving (excluding unknown items): 71 Calories; 4g Fat (42.7% calories from fat); trace Protein; 10g Carbohydrate; 1g Dietary Fiber; 9mg Cholesterol; 1mg Sodium. Exchanges: 1/2 Fruit; 1/2 Fat.

## **Glazed carrots**

Servings: 4

Another recipe, for rural or vegetarian food: Take root vegetables and boil them well, then take them off and fry them in ghee flavored with sesame.

1 pound carrots 1 cup water 1 tablespoon roasted sesame oil 1 tablespoon ghee 1 pinch salt

Wash, peel, and slice carrots into small lengths, if not using baby-cut carrots. Simmer for 10 to 15 minutes until tender, then drain. Heat oil and ghee in a skillet over medium heat, add the carrots and salt, then fry for about five minutes until lightly browned and glazed. (Redaction Chris Adler-France ©2013)

Cook's Comments: Based on what root vegetables were named in other recipes in the Nimatnama (and what was available for a winter meal in Western NY), I chose carrots. This recipe is also delicious with parsnips, kohlrabi, sweet potatoes.

Per Serving (excluding unknown items): 73 Calories; 4g Fat (41.5% calories from fat); 1g Protein; 10g Carbohydrate; 3g Dietary Fiber; 9mg Cholesterol; 71mg Sodium. Exchanges: 2 Vegetable; 1/2 Fat.

#### Marinated chicken kabobs

#### Servings: 8

Another recipe is for skewered meat for use where fires are available, either for taghran (game birds) or sheep meat. First of all, cut the meat very finely, wash it with ... good water and boil it. Add salt, asofeotida and chopped potherbs and boil it. If it has become well-cooked, tie it with thread and marinate it with all kinds of potherbs mixed with lime juice. Leave it in one place for several hours and then roast it.

2 pounds chicken thighs, ground or minced 1/2 teaspoon salt
1 tablespoon basil, fresh, minced
1 tablespoon mint, fresh, minced
1 tablespoon parsley, fresh, minced
1 tablespoon lime juice, fresh
1 tablespoon safflower oil
1 tablespoon cilantro leaves, fresh, minced

Wash and dry herbs, then mix together first three herbs with salt and lime juice, then add to chicken and let marinate for at least half an hour. Form mixture into long sausages onto skewers, brush with oil. Broil for 10 to 15 minutes until browned, turning halfway through. Serve with cilantro on the side. (Redaction Chris Adler-France ©2013)

Cook's Comment: I selected herbs mentioned in other recipes in the Nimatnama. I chose to omit asofoetida from this recipe since it is in several other redactions in this meal. As with the beef recipe, I chose safflower oil because it is commonly used in India and is neutral flavored. Although ghee (browned clarified butter) is cited nearly every original recipe in the Nimatnama, I chose to use toasted sesame oil and safflower in some of the redactions for variety and intolerance reasons.

Per Serving (excluding unknown items): 207 Calories; 15g Fat (68.1% calories from fat); 16g Protein; 1g Carbohydrate; trace Dietary Fiber; 75mg Cholesterol; 202mg Sodium. Exchanges: 0 Grain(Starch); 2 Lean Meat; 0 Vegetable; 0 Fruit; 2 Fat.

## Naan (flatbread)

Servings: 4

Another recipe, for thin soft zarat bread: Rub flour on top and underneath the dough and cook it in a way that prevents it from becoming hard or broken. Then eat it with honey and ghee.

1 cup all-purpose flour 1 cup white whole wheat flour 1 teaspoon salt 3/4 cup water honey ghee

Scoop flour into a mixing bowl, then add the salt and enough water to mix together into a stiff but supple dough with your hands -- you may need more or less than the suggested amount, depending upon the flour used and the humidity. The dough will initially be very shaggy and stick like crazy to your fingers, but scrape them off and keep working with your hands until it forms a nice ball.

Wrap in plastic wrap for about 15 minutes to let rest (and to prevent a dry skin from forming on the dough). Unwrap, divide into 8 even sections with a bench knife or kitchen knife, then, with lightly floured hands, form each section into a ball and roll out thinly on a lightly floured surface. Heat a griddle or skillet to medium heat (note that you do not need to use any oil or fat), add one flatbread, and cook until brown spots begin to appear underneath. (The flatbread may or may not start to puff up as well.) Flip over and continue to cook until lightly browned on the second side. Remove to a plate and continue cooking the remaining breads. Serve with bowls of honey & ghee mixed together. (Redaction Chris Adler-France ©2013)

Cook's Comments: I based this technique on the scant description in the cookbook and the hands-on demonstration I observed of some coworkers of mine visiting from India who offered to show me how their families made chapati (whole wheat flatbreads). The only step I left out was the exuberant slapping down of the hot cooked flatbread on the countertop to deflate it. Although fun to do, I opted to serve puffed breads at this meal.

Per Serving (excluding unknown items): 114 Calories; trace Fat (2.5% calories from fat); 3g Protein; 24g Carbohydrate; 1g Dietary Fiber; 0mg Cholesterol; 535mg Sodium. Exchanges: 1 1/2 Grain(Starch).

### **Pilaf**

#### Servings: 8

A recipe for rice with ghee: Put good ghee into a cooking pot. When it becomes hot, flavour it with camphor, rosewater, and white ambergris. Then having mixed rice with saffron and salt, put it in the ghee and fry it well. Then add water, pine kernels, pistachios, peels almonds, cardamoms, cloves, and shelled white coconut. Break them into pieces, do not mince them. Mix them all together and put them into a cooking pot and cook them well.

1 tablespoon ghee
1 pinch saffron threads
1 tablespoon cardamom seeds
1 cup water
1 cup coconut milk
1 cup long-grain brown rice
1/2 teaspoon salt
3 drops rosewater
1 tablespoon shredded coconut

Rinse rice in a sieve and let drain. Heat ghee in a saucepan over medium-high heat, add cardamom and saffron, and let bloom until fragrant. Add water and coconut milk and bring to a boil. Stir in the rice and salt, cover, reduce the heat, and let simmer for 30 to 45 minutes. Add more ghee, a few drops of rosewater, and the shredded coconut, and stir before serving. (Redaction Chris Adler-France ©2013)

Cook's Comments: Although very accurate period flavorings, edible camphor is very challenging to find, and ambergris is ethically and budgetarily A Bad Idea. So, nope, just sticking with a little food-grade rosewater, thank you very much. As with all feasts at this location, I omitted the nuts since the church site's day school has children with severe nuts allergies.

Per Serving (excluding unknown items): 169 Calories; 10g Fat (49.3% calories from fat); 3g Protein; 20g Carbohydrate; 1g Dietary Fiber; 4mg Cholesterol; 141mg Sodium. Exchanges: 1 Grain(Starch); 0 Fruit; 2 Fat.

## Plain rice

Servings: 16

Another recipe for plain rice: Take two parts of water and one part of milk and put them into a cooking pot and set it to boil. When it comes to the boil, add the rice. When it is cooked, strain off the surplus water and remove the steamed rice.

1 cup white rice 1 cup water 1 cup milk, 2% or whole 1 pinch salt

Heat liquids to a boil in a pot, add the rice and salt, stir, cover, reduce heat, and let simmer for 20 minutes.

Per Serving (excluding unknown items): 52 Calories; 1g Fat (10.4% calories from fat); 1g Protein; 10g Carbohydrate; trace Dietary Fiber; 2mg Cholesterol; 17mg Sodium. Exchanges: 1/2 Grain(Starch); 0 Non-Fat Milk; 0 Fat.

## Sauteed greens with basil & mango

Servings: 24

Another recipe, for the method for vegetables: Put green vegetables into a cooking pot, add asofeotida, salt, and ghee, and cook them. When they are cooked, put in sacred basil leaves, sweet basil leaves, fresh leaves of the mango tree, fresh lime leaves, fresh sour-orange leaves, and mint, each of which have been tied separately into a bunch. Place the bunches on the vegetables. Put the bunches and the vegetables on a dish and dish them up.

1 bag kale
1 bag baby spinach
2 tablespoons safflower oil
1 pinch asofoetida
2 tablespoons basil, fresh, chopped
2 tablespoons mint, fresh, chopped
1/4 cup mango, fresh or frozen, diced
1/2 teaspoon lime juice, fresh
1 teaspoon orange rind, fresh

Wash and spin-dry greens, then chop roughly. Heat oil over medium-high heat, add asofoetida and bloom for a few minutes. Add the greens and stir fry for a minute until just wilted. Remove and toss with herbs, mango, and lime juice. Garnish with orange rind. (Redaction Chris Adler-France ©2013)

Cook's Commnt: Since I could not find citrus leaves, I chose to use citrus rind in this dish.

Per Serving (excluding unknown items): 14 Calories; 1g Fat (71.8% calories from fat); trace Protein; 1g Carbohydrate; trace Dietary Fiber; 0mg Cholesterol; 2mg Sodium. Exchanges: 0 Grain(Starch); 0 Vegetable; 0 Fruit; 0 Fat.

## Sauteed squash with cumin

Servings: 16

Another recipe for bhuji (fried vegetables): Use pumpkin or grains or melon, whatever is required, prepare it, cut it finely and rub crushed salt into it by hand. Squeeze the juice out, throw the rest away and flavor the liquid. The flavouring is as follows.... onions...roast cumin, pepper (numerous other ingredients omitted).

3 pounds butternut squash, peeled and chopped 1/2 teaspoon salt 1 large onion, peeled and chopped 1 teaspoon cumin seeds 1/4 teaspoon black pepper, ground 1 tablespoon safflower oil

Simmer or microwave the squash for about 8 minutes until partially cooked. Heat oil in a skilled over medium-high heat, add seeds and bloom until fragrant, then add onions, salt, and pepper, and fry over medium heat until browned. Add squash, stir, add a tablespoon of water, cover, and let cook for about 5 to 8 minutes until squash fully cooked through. (Redaction Chris Adler-France ©2013)

Cook's Comment: I chose to use butternut squash as a substitute for pumpkin as it is in season and inexpensive.

Per Serving (excluding unknown items): 42 Calories; 1g Fat (17.7% calories from fat); 1g Protein; 9g Carbohydrate; 1g Dietary Fiber; 0mg Cholesterol; 70mg Sodium. Exchanges: 1/2 Grain(Starch); 0 Vegetable; 0 Fat.

## **Spiced beans**

Servings: 24

Another recipe, for bara of dal mash: Prepare good bara and then take some fresh dugh and boil rice in it. Then put salt, asofeotida, and green coriander into that which has become broken and boil it. When it is well cooked, add cumin, fenugreek, cardamons, cloves, and pepper...

1 cup moong beans, rinsed
1 1/2 cups water
1/4 teaspoon salt
1 pinch asofeotida
1/2 teaspoon cardamom seeds
1/2 teaspoon cumin seeds
1/8 teaspoon fenugreek seed
1 pinch cloves, ground
1 teaspoon black pepper, ground
1 tablespoon cilantro, fresh, minced

Heat a dry skillet over medium-high heat. Add the asofoetida and cardamom, and dry-toast until fragrant. Add the beans and remaining seasonings, and stir to incorporate. Reduce heat, add water, cover, and let cook for 30 to 45 minutes until beans are tender, adding more water if necessary. Garnish with cilantro. (Redaction Chris Adler-France ©2013)

Cook's Comments: I initially redacted this with rice milk as the liquid, but opted to use just water for this feast.

Per Serving (excluding unknown items): 1 Calories; trace Fat (11.9% calories from fat); trace Protein; trace Carbohydrate; trace Dietary Fiber; 0mg Cholesterol; 23mg Sodium. Exchanges: 0 Grain(Starch); 0 Lean Meat; 0 Fat.

## **Yogurt**

Servings: 16

Another recipe, for the method for curds: Put potherbs, camphor, musk, and rosewater into mast (coagulated milk) and flavor it with the perfume of roses.

1 half gallon milk, 2% or whole 1/2 cup good Greek-style yogurt (I prefer whole or 2% Fage) 3 drops rosewater 1/4 teaspoon salt 1 tablespoon honey

There are several methods for preparing yogurt at home. Various online websites and Alton Brown's Good Eats: The Early Years cookbook give directions on how to do so without any special equipment other than a candy thermeter. I've tried with some success an interesting technique from an online website to prepare yogurt in the microwave. THL Odriana posted to her blog how to make it overnight in a crockpot. I have a dedicated yogurt maker.

Regardless of the device/technique you choose, heat the milk to about 180 degrees in a thick-bottomed pot, then remove to an ice water bath and let cool to 110 degrees. Stir in the commecial yogurt (or yogurt starter, if you prefer that). Pour into whatever device you are using, cove, and let sit for at least 8 hours undisturbed. At this point, you can stir in the salt, rosewater, honey. To make Greek-style yogurt, transfer to a cheesecloth- or papertowel-lined sieve, place over a deep container (to prevent the bottom of the sieve from sitting in drained whey), and let sit in the refrigerator for at least two hours to thicken. (Redaction Chris Adler-France ©2013)

Cook's Comment: I chose to add a touch of honey to this, to cut the sourness a tad.

Per Serving (excluding unknown items): 13 Calories; 1g Fat (33.2% calories from fat); 1g Protein; 2g Carbohydrate; trace Dietary Fiber; 2mg Cholesterol; 41mg Sodium. Exchanges: 0 Non-Fat Milk; 0 Fat; 0 Other Carbohydrates.