

Learning to Maximize the Use of Your Real Milk and Cream

Written by Sarah Couture Pope

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Many of us raised in the United States since the advent of pasteurized milk probably have a similar memory from our days in elementary school: Sitting down with our lunch box and our half pint of pasteurized milk purchased from the school cafeteria, sticking the straw into the milk carton, and taking a big swig only to recoil in disgust at the taste. Quickly, the bad milk is spit out to the dismay of classmates sitting close by.

Few things taste and smell as bad as pasteurized milk that has gone past its "use by" date. Even as a child in school, I knew instinctively that this milk was not good for me and should not be swallowed. Rightly so. The bad smell and taste is nature's way of letting us know that this food should not be consumed, as it could cause sickness and possibly even death.

For this reason, Americans have been trained to quickly dispose of pasteurized milk that is older than the date stamped on the carton. Most people won't even taste the questionable milk to see whether it has another day of use left. The thought of actually letting putrid milk touch your tongue is just too dreadful. It is much easier to just throw it out!

Having formed such habits from an early age, it's no wonder that we scratch our heads when it comes to raw milk and cream that has started to sour. The unpredictable refrigerated life of raw milk is what confused me when I initially made the switch from pasteurized milk. Sometimes the raw milk tasted fresh for as long as two weeks. Other times, it stayed fresh for one week. I experienced the same variations with raw cream.

After asking a very elderly friend of mine, who was fortunate enough to have been raised on a farm, what to do, I realized that the first law of naturally soured raw milk and cream is "do not throw it out!" Indeed, naturally soured milk and cream are highly useful items. In fact, it can be argued that the soured versions are even more healthful than the "fresh from the cow variety" due to the higher level of enzymes and friendly bacteria present. Pasteurization destroys these naturally occurring enzymes and probiotics, which explains why processed milk goes rancid and does not sour.

Clearly, raw milk and cream that have naturally soured are safe to consume. If you still aren't sure, give a few ounces to your cat or dog and you will see how excited they are to oblige you by wolfing it down!

Once you have successfully changed your mindset about throwing out raw milk and cream that isn't absolutely fresh, you will be ready for the next step: using it in a variety of tasty and healthful dishes. Here are a few ideas for incorporating soured milk and cream into your cooking repertoire:

Make homemade whey and cream cheese with the soured milk (leave the milk on the counter until it fully separates. Strain through a strainer or colander lined with tea towel). Try blending the cream cheese with a few strawberries and maple syrup for a delicious spread for sprouted bagels.

Soak organic pancake mix overnight in soured milk. This approach results in much tastier, fluffier, and healthier pancakes than mixing with water and cooking immediately.

Use soured milk or cream to make scrambled eggs.

Use soured milk to make custard pudding or creme brulée (see recipes below).

Use soured cream on a baked potato or spread on a sandwich instead of mayonnaise.

Mix a tablespoon of soured cream in a bowl of soup to liven it up and make it digestible.

Use soured milk instead of whey to soak oatmeal overnight.

Mix carob powder and a little rapadura into slightly soured milk and give to your kids as "chocolate milk" They'll never know the difference (mine don't!) and it's good for them.

Use soured cream to make sweet potato casserole (see recipe below).

Use soured cream to make meatloaf (see Nourishing Traditions, page 356).

Warm slightly soured milk on the stove with some cocoa powder and Rapadura to make fabulous hot chocolate.

Make traditional British whitesauce with soured milk (see recipe below).

Whether you use soured milk and cream in a cooked recipe that calls for fresh dairy or you use it on a sandwich or baked potato, none of it goes to waste. Most importantly, you have now incorporated the practical aspects of using raw dairy in your home. All of us want to maximize our investment in whole foods, a goal clearly embraced by traditional cooking methods. A simple change in mindset is what is necessary to attain this end. Happy cooking!

Custard Pudding

Serves 4

3 eggs

1 3/4 cups soured, raw milk

1/4 cup Rapadura or maple syrup (maple syrup gives a kind of "flan" taste)

1 teaspoon vanilla

1/8 teaspoon sea salt

Whip together in baking dish. Cook at 400 degrees for about 45 minutes or until knife or toothpick comes out clean. Cool, serve.

Note: I've also made this with 1/2 soured cream and 1/2 soured milk. Total decadence!

Hint: This is also very nice cooked/served in a pie crust made with lard.

Sweet Potato Casserole

Serves 4

1-2 pounds sweet potato
1/4 pound (1 stick) butter
1 7-ounce package raw coconut cream
(available at most Oriental or Latin
American markets)
1/4 cup soured, raw cream
3 egg yolks
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
1/2 teaspoon nutmeg
1/4 teaspoon sea salt

Bake (do not microwave) sweet potato until tender and peel while hot. Place in a casserole dish and mash until smooth. Melt coconut cream and butter together over low heat on the stove. Mix butter/coconut mixture, cream, egg yolks and spices with mashed sweet potato in the casserole dish. Whip until mixed well. Sprinkle with additional cinnamon on top if desired. Place in a preheated 350 degree oven for 30 minutes or until bubbly on top.

Hint for Moms: This is my one-year-old's favorite dish!

Traditional British White Sauce

Makes 2 cups

2 cups soured milk
2 tablespoons arrowroot powder
2 tablespoons Rapadura
1 1/2 tablespoons butter
2 tablespoons brandy
1/2 teaspoon vanilla

Gently heat 1 1/2 cups of soured milk over medium heat but do not allow to boil. Mix Rapadura and arrowroot powder together. Add remaining 1/2 cup of cold, soured milk to rapadura-arrowroot mixture to make a paste. Mix this paste with the heated milk and cook for 5-7 minutes, stirring constantly. Add butter, brandy, and vanilla while cooking. Add a bit of cold, soured milk after sauce is cooked to keep skin from forming on top.

Hint: This is a delicious topping for fruit, homemade cobbler, or fruit pie.

Creme Brulee

Serves 8

1 quart heavy, soured raw cream
8 medium egg yolks
1/2 cup Rapadura
1 tablespoon vanilla extract
8 rounded teaspoons Rapadura or Sucanat

Heat cream gently with vanilla but do not let it boil. Beat egg yolks with Rapadura or Sucanat until smooth and well blended. Beat vanilla and hot cream into yolk mixture. Pour into 8 4-inch ramekins (about 3/4 cup per ramekin). Set dishes in very shallow pans of warm water. Bake 45-60 minutes in a 300-degree oven until custard sets and forms a crust on top.

Let custards cool, cover lightly with waxed paper and chill 4 hours in the refrigerator. To serve, sprinkle 1 rounded teaspoon Rapadura or Sucanat over the top of each. Place under the broiler until the sugar melts, being careful not to burn. (It melts very quickly!) Let the casseroles cool and then return to refrigerator until melted sugar forms a crust. Serve very cold.

Hint: Serve this when your vegetarian friends come to dinner. They won't be able to get enough of all the wonderful animal fats in this dessert.

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