



A history of yogurt

Yogurt is one of the oldest produced foods in human history. Though we do not exactly know when it was consumed for the first time, most historians place its discovery somewhere between 9000 and 6000 BC.

According to some researchers yogurt was accidentally discovered in central Asia during the Neolithic period, probably by a man attempting to store milk in a warm climate. In this way, the fermentation process was discovered and yogurt started to spread to the Middle East and Europe.

One theory of the discovery of yogurt is that early man stored the milk in the intestines of animals. The enzymes contained in the intestines may have started the initial fermentation process. Early man enjoyed it and continued making it. Yogurt is mentioned in many ancient texts including the ancient Indian Ayurvedic scripts, the Bible and historic texts by Greek and Roman authors like Herodotus, Homer and Pliny. There are also some references to yogurt in the Bible.

The great Mongol warrior Genghis Khan is said to have encouraged the drinking of a fermented horse milk yogurt called kumis, which would keep his warriors healthy and make

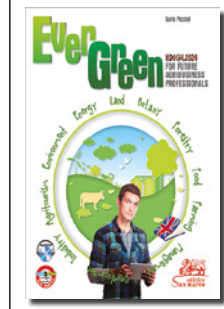
them braver when facing enemies.

According to historians, in the 16th century a Turkish doctor saved the life of King Francis I by treating him with yogurt made from goat's milk. The king had been suffering from some type of intestinal illness and was apparently cured by yogurt.

While yogurt became more and more popular both for its unique taste and health benefits, it was not until the early 20th century that the benefits of fermented milk were studied by a Russian scientist named Elie Metchnikoff.

Yogurt is a great source of calcium and of high-quality protein. Besides, it contains a lot of vitamins and minerals. Finally, the 'good' bacteria called probiotics added to milk to produce yogurt help maintain and restore the delicate balance of both 'good' and 'bad' bacteria necessary for a healthy digestive system. In the 1950s and 1960s, yogurt really gained a huge popularity both in Europe and in the United States. Nowadays different types of yogurt including kefir, Greek style yogurt, Swiss and fruit yogurts can be found at almost any grocery store.

(Adapted from www.livescience.com)



ACTIVITIES

- 1 Create a mind map on the theme 'yogurt'.