

# Put some culture into your milk

by Lynette Louw

**Amasi is a traditional fermented (sour) milk drink of the indigenous people of South Africa. Large processors and well-known dairy companies have been producing amasi for quite some time now, due to the drink's popularity.**



Amasi is also known as “maas”, which is believed to come from the Zulu name for sour milk namely *amaswi*. This product is traditionally made in clay pots and calabashes. Milk is added to the container at regular intervals. The bacteria on the surface of the container serve as a starter culture.

In the modern processing, maas is referred to as “cultured” milk. A freeze-dried culture is added to the milk and then fermented (soured) until it reaches a certain level of acidity (sourness). Maas has a smooth texture and a slightly sour taste. Full cream milk is used to make *amasi*.

As with all other dairy products, *amasi* is very healthy. It is packed with Vitamin A and proteins that the body needs to function well and protect against illness. The fat content makes it a very effective way to enrich any eating plan. It is also very effective against infections and can be applied to a wound or infected area to relieve itching and thrush.

If you are a good runner and love participating in sport, then *amasi* is the perfect energy drink. It is packed with carbohydrates which is the primary source of energy used during exercise. Even if you are trying to lose weight, carbohydrates such as *amasi* must still form part of your diet.

If you are a diabetes sufferer, you have to take care not to ingest too much fat. Therefore you should rather opt for a low-fat *amasi*. Most of the major dairy producers manufacture the low-fat version.

*Amasi* is a traditional food and easy to make at home:

- Take one or two litres of fresh milk
- Leave it in a container on the counter or table for a day or two
- Your will notice the milk separating from the water and become like a gel (this is the *amasi*)
- Drain the water from the container, but be careful not to drain the *amasi*
- Then pour the *amasi* into a jug or container and put it in the fridge to cool.

Once the *amasi* is cold, it can be drunk plain or you can stir in a spoon full of sugar. You can even add a bit of raspberry or strawberry juice for some added flavour. *Amasi* can be eaten on your putu pap and it is a great way to kill any hunger pangs. **UM**