

Homemade Sauerkraut

The vibrant, tangy flavor and crunchy texture of homemade sauerkraut is now a staple in our kitchen, as it can be in yours too! Green or purple cabbage (or a mixture) can be used here, as well as your favorite root veggies: beets, radishes, turnips, onions, carrots and more!

1 medium-sized head cabbage (about 2-3 pounds)
4 teaspoons sea salt

Optional mix-ins:

½ - 1 cup shredded carrots, turnips and/or radish
½ - 1 cup thinly sliced onion
1-2 Tablespoons caraway seeds, mustard seeds, and/or dried dill

1. Have sanitized wide-mouth (quart jars) and small (pint) jars ready for use. See **Sanitizing Guide** for more information about jar selection, and prepare at least one quart jar per 2-3 pounds cabbage.
2. Remove outer leaves of cabbage, and chop off any browned or damaged spots. Slice cabbage in quarters and remove the core.
3. Slice cabbage according to your preference: slice into thin strips, chop into small bites, or shred in a food processor. Add cabbage to a large bowl and sprinkle with all the salt.
4. Using your hands, massage cabbage to release liquids and soften slightly. You can also let the cabbage stand for 15 minutes to soften further. Stir in optional mix-ins if using.
5. Using utensils and/or your hands, pack cabbage into the jars tightly, pressing down firmly as you go. Water will release from the cabbage as you pack it in.
6. As you pack, the cabbage should become submerged under the liquid (brine) and there should be at least an inch of space at the top of your container. If there is not enough brine to cover the cabbage, make more brine with 1 teaspoon salt and ½ cup filtered water.
7. Top cabbage with smaller pint jar or weights, and cover loosely with a towel or a loose plastic bag. Place jar onto a rimmed plate and let rest.
8. **The average fermentation time is about seven days.** Check sauerkraut everyday to ensure that the vegetables are submerged under the brine. If it has evaporated, add more brine using the measurements above to ensure cabbage stays covered. If the sauerkraut becomes rotten smelling or moldy, it should not be eaten.
9. Refrigerate after fermentation is finished. Sauerkraut keeps for a very long time in the fridge, and will improve with age. Enjoy with salads, sandwiches, and in wraps.

Yield: 1-2 quarts sauerkraut

Homemade Kim Chi

Kim Chi is the naturally fermented, spicy cabbage side dish of Korea. Its zesty flavor works great for fried rice, soups, and even salads, but it's excellent on its own too! Kim chi is usually made with napa cabbage, but can be made with green or red cabbage.

- 1 Napa cabbage (about 2-3 pounds)
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1-2 Tablespoons fresh grated ginger
- 1 Tablespoon sea salt
- 1-2 Tablespoons Korean chili powder or red chili flakes

Optional mix-ins:

½ - 1 cup shredded carrots, daikon radish or turnips

1. Have sanitized wide-mouth (quart jars) and small (pint) jars ready for use. See **Sanitizing Guide** for more information about jar selection, and prepare at least one quart jar per 2-3 pounds cabbage.
2. Add cabbage, other vegetables, garlic and ginger into a very large bowl. Sprinkle with salt and mash together with your hands to mix in the salt and help the vegetables sweat out water. Let stand for a few minutes to allow vegetables to release their juices. Toss in chili powder.
3. Using your hands, massage cabbage to release liquids and soften slightly. You can also let the cabbage stand for 15 minutes to soften further.
4. Using utensils and/or your hands, pack cabbage into the jars tightly, pressing down firmly as you go. Water will release from the cabbage as you pack it in.
5. As you pack, the cabbage should become submerged under the liquid (brine) and there should be at least an inch of space at the top of your container. If there is not enough brine to cover the cabbage, make more brine with 1 teaspoon salt and ½ cup filtered water.
6. Top cabbage with smaller pint jar or weights, and cover loosely with a towel or a loose plastic bag. Place jar onto a rimmed plate and let rest.
7. **The average fermentation time is about seven days.** Check the kim chi everyday to ensure that the vegetables are submerged under the brine. If it has evaporated, add more brine using the measurements above to ensure cabbage stays covered. If the kim chi becomes rotten smelling or moldy, it should not be eaten.
8. Refrigerate after fermentation is finished. Kim chi keeps for a very long time in the fridge, and will improve with age.

Yield: 1-2 quarts kim chi

How to Sanitize Jars for Fermentation Projects!

In fermentation projects there is a delicate balance of good and bad bacteria at play, and as much as possible you want to give the good guys a chance to thrive. Sanitizing your jars prior to use is the best way to ensure that the good bugs are off to a great start.

The jars need to be sterilized because the ferments sit inside the jar for a week or more, and that environment needs to be as clean as possible. But there is no need to sanitize bowls, utensils, or cutting boards.

Notes about jar selection:

- **Always choose jars that are meant for canning or preserving:** Mason jars like Ball or Kerr are made to be boiled in water for canning and thus can withstand the heat safely. DO NOT use recycled pasta sauce jars or similar: these are fine for storing food, but may shatter when heated.
- **Jar Size:** My favorite way of fermenting uses wide mouth quart-size jars for fermenting, and small pint jars for weights. Like the large jars, choose small jars that can be sanitized.

How to Sterilize Jars

- Add your jars to a large stockpot and cover with tap water (cover by at least one inch).
- Bring to a boil and let simmer for five minutes at a low, rolling boil.
- Remove carefully using tongs and place onto towels (cold countertops can shock the jars and break them). Let cool slightly then proceed with recipe.
- If your jars do not fit into a stockpot, warm the glass under hot tap water. Place jars in sink and carefully fill until overflowing with boiling hot water, ensuring that boiling water covers the inside and outside rim of the jar. Let stand for five minutes, then drain water carefully.

Other things to note:

- Always sanitize a few extra jars just in case your kraut doesn't fit into the expected sizes. It's much better to have a few jars ready to go than to have to go back and start the sanitizing process again when you're already elbow-deep in cabbage.
- Sanitize just before you begin: don't sanitize in the morning for a fermentation evening. Dust, germs, and other airborne miscellanea can get into the jars and make the jars dirty.

More fermented fun:

The recipes from this workshop and other fermented recipes can be found on my websites:

- <http://eatdrinkbetter.com/2015/06/22/how-to-ferment-safely-sanitize-those-jars/>
- <http://greenlivingideas.com/2013/03/15/homemade-kimchi/>
- <http://vibrantwellnessjournal.com/2013/09/09/how-to-make-sauerkraut/>
- <http://vibrantwellnessjournal.com/2016/07/12/easy-homemade-vegan-yogurt/>
- <http://vibrantwellnessjournal.com/2011/12/29/how-to-make-water-kefir/>
- <http://eatdrinkbetter.com/2012/02/22/kombucha-tea/>

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