



Slice it, Salt it, Stomp it! **How to make homemade lacto-fermented Sauerkraut/Kimchi**

Introduction

This class is about how to preserve your own fresh vegetables. But, it is also about making a tasty new food that is still raw and rich in digestive enzymes. Fermented foods are still alive and their taste reflects that. You'll see bubbles, taste tanginess, and watch your food age and grow in flavor over time.

The subject of fermenting vegetables is broad and complex with endless possibilities for variations and techniques. Today we'll start with the basics: slicing, salting, stomping, and savoring homemade lacto-fermented veggies!

Tools needed

- Glass wide-mouth pint, quart or half-gallon canning jars with lids (available at most grocery or hardware stores—you might have to ask them to order the half-gallons for you) OR stoneware crocks
- large bowls, spoons, measuring tools, knives, grater, cutting board
- potato masher or wooden pounder or clean hands!

Basic Recipes

Fermented shredded vegetables in their own juices like sauerkraut or kimchi

The ratio is about 5 lbs shredded vegetables to 3 Tbls salt. Size this up or down for whatever container you're using. Approximately 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ pounds of vegetables fit into a quart jar.

Sauerkraut (1 quart):

*Approximately 2 pounds cored and shredded cabbage
1 tablespoon salt*

Korean Kimchi (1 quart):

Traditionally kimchi is made with Chinese cabbage but you can also substitute regular cabbage if you don't have the Chinese version.

*$\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 head Chinese or regular cabbage (about 1-2 pounds), thinly sliced
1 cup carrots, grated
1/2 cup radish, salad turnip, etc, grated
1-2 scallions, chopped (or $\frac{1}{2}$ cup onion, minced)
1 tbsp ginger, minced
1-3 cloves garlic, minced
1+ tsp red chili flakes
1 tbsp salt*

Optional additional ingredients: caraway seeds (1 Tbls per quart), minced jalapeno or dried red chili flakes, grated carrots, minced onions, minced garlic, grated radish (daikon or other), grated rutabaga or turnip, grated kohlrabi, minced ginger root...Experiment! Any combo of these ingredients should be uniquely delicious!

Combine all ingredients into a large bowl and pound or massage using clean hands for 15 minutes with a potato masher or wooden pounder until juicy. Pack into a quart jar leaving one to two inches empty to the top of jar. There should be juices visible above the top of the cabbage in the jar. If this is not the case, return to bowl and pound again or add brine to bring juices above cabbage using recipe below. Put lids on, label, and leave out at room temperature for at least 3 days.

At this point, you need to mature the sauerkraut. You *can* start eating it right away but, generally sauerkraut takes a little while to be really flavorful and fermented. Age it at room temperature until you like the taste. Depending on your preference this will take weeks or months. We typically leave ours out to mature for 2-3 weeks in hot summer and for 1-2 months in cool winter. When you like the taste put your kraut into the refrigerator. That way it will last several more months and continue to slowly mature further. Every sauerkraut/kimchi you make will be different, but generally you're looking for tanginess, sour taste, and a softened texture.

Please note: Sauerkraut can have a tendency to lose moisture over time. This is something you need to be aware of. Using the brine recipe of 2 Tbls salt to 1 qt. water to keep the liquid above the cabbage at all times ensures that you will be eating this sauerkraut for many months to come.

Important tips to keep in mind while fermenting...

- **MONITOR:** Put your jar out on the kitchen counter so that you'll see it every day and can check the progress. Monitoring is the most important thing to remember to do when your jar is fermenting!
- **BUBBLES:** Your jars will get bubbly and be full of liquid—this is okay and good! It means they're fermenting!
- **TEMPERATURE/TIME LENGTH:** Generally you'll keep your jars out to ferment at room temperature for at least 2-3 days and up to a week or even much longer. During the period that you leave your jars at room temperature, you will need to keep an eye on them because once the fermentation process starts you will need to monitor the progress. If the temperature is very warm (above 70 degrees) you may need less time at room temperature. If the temperature is cool, you'll need more days. Taste them. If they taste good, tangy, and have softened some, they're ready to eat and can be stored in the fridge.
- **RELEASE PRESSURE:** *You need to release the pressure that gets built up during this warm period of rapid activity.* To do this, open the lids and let out the air that builds up. This is normal, and you will have to do it for every jar that you make at least once a day while they are at room temperature. If you neglect this step, the jars could crack or worse explode!
- **PUSH DOWN LIQUID:** When you open the jars once a day take a fork and push down the vegetables if they've risen up. This helps them stay under the juices and aids the fermentation process. If there is not enough liquid to cover the vegetables at the top after you open the jar and push them down, you should add brine to cover (see brine for sauerkraut recipe above).
- **SKIM ANY MOLD:** You might find a little mold on the top of the jar of the ferments. Don't worry, this is okay and normal—just skim it off. The fermented vegetables inside are still good.
- Sometimes something goes wrong and the ferment will smell and taste bad. Don't worry; you won't want to eat it anyway, but it won't harm you if you do.

Recommended Resources

- *The Complete Idiots Guide to Fermenting Foods* by Wardeh Harmon, Alpha 2012
Really clear and well explained with lots of great recipes for veggies, drinks, dairy, etc. Great resource for beginners with a focus on small batches in jars.
- *Wild Fermentation* by Sandor Ellix Katz, Chelsea Green 2003 www.wildfermentation.com
- *Nourishing Traditions* by Sally Fallon

Please stay in touch! You are welcome to contact me with any questions you have as you go along. And, I love getting progress reports! Good luck!