



Simple Vegetable Ferments

For Dilly Carrots:

- 4-6 carrots (or 1 quart other seasonal vegetables), cut into sticks
- 4 tsp sea salt
- 1 quart filtered water
- 3 garlic cloves
- few sprigs of dill

For Dilly Beans:

- 1/2 pound young green beans, trimmed
- 4 tsp sea salt
- 1 quart water
- 1 tbsp red pepper flakes
- 2 garlic cloves
- 1 large handful of dill

Instructions

1. Dissolve the salt in the water to make brine and set aside.
2. Arrange the veggies, garlic, and herbs in the jar, packing tightly and keeping under the jar neck.
3. Fill with brine, leaving 1 inch at the top of the jar.
4. Use a weight, if necessary, to keep veggies under the brine.
5. Cover with a lid, airlock, or cloth. Set the jar on a plate or in a pie plate to catch the spillage that may occur due to the fermentation process. (If using a lid, burp when needed to release pressure in the jar. If using fermentation top, no burping is necessary.)
6. Start tasting after 3-4 days, making sure to use a clean utensil each time you put one in the jar. When the flavor and texture suit you, put a lid on them and refrigerate to slow fermentation. The veggies will continue to ferment slowly over time.

Simple Seasonal Sauerkraut

Courtesy of Andrea at Farm and Hearth
www.farmandhearth.com

Be open to experimentation – and do keep detailed notes on your process! Sometimes, something works out – other times, it doesn't. As long as you are able to learn from the experience, it wasn't wasted. It all contributes to your kitchen knowledge!

The Food:

- 1 organic head of cabbage (Chinese cabbage, green cabbage, it doesn't matter)
- 1 to 1-1/2 tablespoons sea salt, approximately
- Optional: caraway seeds, turmeric, peeled and crushed garlic, peeled and shredded ginger, small amount of dried or shredded fruit (about ½ cup or less), other vegetables cut, shredded, julienned, diced or sliced the way you like them

The Equipment:

- Large metal or plastic bowl that won't break
- Optional: pounder, mallet, or rolling pin

The Instructions:

1. Shred or coarsely chop cabbage; place in a metal or plastic bowl that won't break and sprinkle with salt.
2. Firmly massage with your hands, or pound with a wooden mallet or the end of a rolling pin for about ten minutes, until the cabbage is very juicy and wet.

When you start pounding, you may think "I'll have to add water to this to get enough brine to cover it!" If you're using nice, fresh cabbage, just keep on pounding till that ten minute mark. You may be surprised how much brine will leak out of that cabbage!

3. Mix in any other spices, herbs, vegetables or fruits that you like. I tend to keep the "other" ingredients at less than 50% of the volume, usually well below that, so my krauts are mostly cabbage.
4. Pack it all into a large jar or multiple jars, pressing the vegetables down so the brine covers them completely. Pieces that poke out or float will probably be thrown away when you open the jar to eat the kraut, so really smash it down firmly!

5. To keep everything beneath the brine, you can add small jar weights (available from culturesforhealth.com and other places), or use the stem end of the cabbage to wedge in to the top of the jar.
6. Place the jar on the counter in a rimmed baking sheet or pan to catch any juices that may leak out; you will need to pop the lid once or even twice a day for a few days. Depending on how warm your house is (70 – 80F is a happy place for fermenting!), you can taste test it as soon as three days; it may take up to a few weeks.

If you don't want it on your counter that long, you can move it to the fridge and let it slow ferment for a lo-o-o-ong time!

Kraut will last months and even years in a cool place. My favorite ones are at least a year old. Some traditions say the true kraut flavor does not even begin to develop until after six months!

Adding caraway seeds, turmeric or even a few tablespoons of raw, cultured whey will help reduce the risk of your kraut molding.

We hear a lot of the same questions over and over in the food lab – that's why they're called frequently asked questions!

1. **How long does it take to ferment my kraut in the jar?** It depends on how much salt you added. With more salt, and in colder temperatures, it will take a long time. A light hand on salt, and a warm kitchen - 70 - 85F - and the kraut can go faster, maybe becoming sour in as little as a week or two. I like to leave my krauts to ferment for a few weeks or even months, and then move them to the fridge for another few months. Some purists say the real flavor doesn't even begin to develop until after six months!
2. **How do I know if my kraut went bad?**
You'll know - it will be slimy and moldy, it will stink to high heaven, and nobody could pay you to eat it! If some mold develops on the top of your kraut, don't be alarmed - gently scoop it off with a spoon, and replace the missing liquid with purified, salted water if necessary (you want your vegetables to stay beneath the brine!). Some of the mold might break off and float away, but just get what you can. The vegetables deep under the brine are still safe for consumption.
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4. How much salt do I use?

I really don't measure the salt - I sprinkle it in as I layer the chopped vegetables before pounding them, and during the summer I tend towards a heavy hand with salt. The lactic acid that the vegetables create are what inhibits the growth of pathogenic bacteria - but lactic acid takes about three days to kick in when fermenting cabbage! That's what the salt is for - it does the work of inhibiting the pathogens until the lactic acid can do the dirty work. If you really insist on a measurement to get started, you can use about 1-1/2 tablespoons of kosher sea salt per average head of cabbage. Get used to using that amount, and pretty soon you'll be able to vary up and down per your own preferences.

5. Why kosher salt, or sea salt, or whatever you had said up there?

Use salt that does not contain iodine and anti-caking agents such as yellow prussiate. These tend to make the cabbage slimy and gross.

Cultural Revivalists is a collaborative effort between Leslie Bobb of Real Simple Health and Lyndsay Gutierrez of Cooking Up Your Best Life. Leslie and Lyndsay are both certified integrative health coaches with a passion for traditional foods in general, and ferments in particular. Their combined training includes psychology, culinary arts, nutrition therapy, fitness nutrition, herbal medicine, integrative health, personal coaching, and public health. Cultural Revivalists can be found “reviving the cultures of traditional cultures” through teaching fermentation and “real foods” classes and workshops around the mid-Atlantic region. They are launching a children’s book series to introduce kids to the world of traditional foods.

Follow them on social media at:

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