

Homemade Sauerkraut

If you want a cool science experiment you can eat, try fermenting your own sauerkraut. Sauerkraut translates to “sour cabbage” and its sourness comes from the lacto-fermentation of yogurt whey and un-iodized salt. It’s easy, and relatively cheap, and well worth the wait!

Preparation Time: 60 minutes active
4-6 weeks inactive

Ingredients for fermenting

1 large head of White or Dutch Cabbage, loose outer green leaves discarded

About 2 cups of whey*

2-3 tbsp. of sea salt or kosher salt (do not use iodized salt!)

*To create whey- get plain yogurt with the least amount of preservatives and spoon into a coffee filter or cheesecloth lined strainer over another bowl. Cover tightly with plastic wrap to prevent refrigerator funk, and refrigerate until you get about 2 quarts of whey. You will need about 2 quarts of yogurt to get this- depending on the quality of the yogurt.



Equipment for fermenting

Gloves

1gallon glass jar with lid

1gallon re-sealable bag

Plastic wrap

Potato masher

Wooden spoon

Canning funnel

Cool environment between 68°F-72°F

1. For the fermentation of the cabbage to occur, a clean environment with no oxygen needs to be creating. In the preparation of this item, sanitation is key- including glove usage- you cannot let the cabbage touch your hands!!!!
2. Wearing gloves, clean and thinly shred the cabbage. In a large bowl mix cabbage with salt together and toss to coat. Let it rest until beginning to wilt. Push it down forcefully with a potato masher and let it rest until about 1/3 original volume.



3. After the volume has shrunk some, pack into the glass jar using the canning funnel. After every couple of spoonfuls, mash the cabbage down in the jar to remove the air. (Alternatively- with your gloved hand, push down forcefully). Continue until all cabbage has been added to the jar.
4. Add enough whey to just cover the cabbage. (Left over whey can be mixed back into the strained yogurt). Using the spoon, continue to press down removing all air bubbles. Oxygen is the enemy! The goal is to have a pH level that ranges from 4-6.
5. Place a piece of plastic wrap directly on top of the cabbage. Place the re-sealable plastic bag in the jar on top of the cabbage. Fill with enough tap water to weigh down the cabbage.



6. Clean up the jar, rim, seal, and inside of the jar. Place in an environment that is between 68°F-72°F. Let this sit until the cabbage loses its stark sulfur compound and the texture changes from crunchy to rubbery. (Remember don't touch with your bare hands- use a fork or gloves!) At this point, it can go into the refrigerator until the flavor has developed to your preference. This process can take up to 6 weeks.



*****Red flags- do not use if any of these conditions develop: White film, creamy film, yeasty odor, mold, slime that is pink or orange. Discard immediately!*****

Ingredients for Cooking Sauerkraut

½ # of smoked bacon, julienned

home-cured Sauerkraut

1 medium onion, sliced thin

salt and ground black pepper to taste
½ cup dry white wine
1-2 bay leaves
chicken stock as needed
1 tbsp. whole caraway seeds, or to taste



1. In a large rondeau or stockpot, render the bacon until crisp. Remove from pan.
2. Add the sliced onions to the bacon fat and sweat until tender. Add the caraway seeds and stir.
3. Add the white wine, and then the sauerkraut with remaining brine, and bay leaves. Cover with chicken stock. Simmer until the flavors are rich. Season as needed with salt and pepper.
4. Before serving, remove the bay leaves. If desired (and if not already eaten), add the crisp bacon back to the sauerkraut.



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