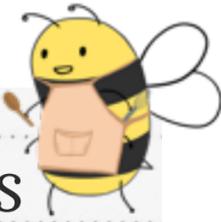


GROW YOUR OWN VEGETABLES

# HOMESTEAD SAUERKRAUT

RECIPE BY BRANDON BEINS



## Ingredients

- 1 Head of Cabbage
- 2.00 - 2.25% Kosher Salt  
(See notes if you have questions)

### Getting Familiar

Sauerkraut is an incredible superfood and one of the most simple ferments to make at home! This is meant as a foundational sauerkraut recipe that you may use to explore adding just about any flavors you dream of creating. Basically, this is an old school sauerkraut recipe which you can use to make endless variations by utilizing different herbs or spices from your garden. If you are new to lacto-fermenting, you may also follow the recipe exactly and let this be a straight-forward place to begin..



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## *Considerations to keep in mind going into this recipe*

Keeping the cabbage submerged under the brine created from salting and tenderizing it will help keep your ferment safe from contamination. This is because being exposed to air can facilitate harmful bacteria development during lacto-fermentation. To keep the cabbage submerged, you can either use the leaf method, which is using the outer leaf and the stem of the cabbage as the weight, or you can use something food-safe and large enough to hold it all down such as a small ceramic plate or a zip top bag filled with water.

While this sauerkraut may be simple if left unchanged, the flavor is far from plain! Sauerkraut brings a crunchy, refreshing texture and a zesty, lively flavor. Whether you are directly following this recipe or incorporating flavors from your garden, sauerkraut is an excellent probiotic source, effective preservation method, and a tasty side dish or addition to meals that would benefit from some acidity and refreshing crunch!

## *Steps of Preparation*

- 1 If using the leaf method, remove the outer couple leaves (no tears, rot, or holes) and the cone-shaped stem of the cabbage - saving both for later.
- 2 Julienne the cabbage. Thoroughly mix the salt throughout the julienne cabbage to begin breaking down/denaturing the cabbage's starches.
- 3 Tenderize with a sanitary plastic spatula or freshly-cleaned hands for approximately 10 minutes. Your goal is tender cabbage with enough liquid to fully submerge it.



GROW YOUR OWN VEGETABLES  
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- 4 (Optional step) Mix in herbs, spices, or other vegetables you want to add, whether it be for flavor, aroma, color, texture, or a bit of each!
- 5 In a sterile, sealable quart jar, add several scoops of cabbage. Use your fist to push the cabbage down, removing any air bubbles.
- 6 (Optional step) If you are making additions, you can layer them throughout layers of the cabbage.
- 7 Continue this way until the jar is filled to about 1 inch or 3 centimeters from the top.
- 8 Use the leaves first then the stem (from step 1) to weigh down the solids below the surface of the liquid. Seal securely with a lid.
- 9 Place the jar on a towel in a dark, warm space (approximately 72 - 75 °F).
- 10 Carefully “burp” the jar once a day by opening the seal to release gas bubbles and built up pressure. Proper use of weights or pressing down your sauerkraut with a sterile plastic spatula occasionally as you burp the ferment could help keep a safe ferment, especially when at the peak of fermentation. (See notes for extended explanation)
- 11 After a few days (3 or 4), check the flavor as often as you would like (at least every 2 - 3 days). This ferment is ready when you are happy with the flavor!



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12 Once ready, move the jar to the fridge which drastically slows the processes of fermentation. Healthy fermentation can continue for up to 6 weeks outside of the fridge.

13 Watch for any signs of mold and discard immediately if found.

Notes:

- The salt's denaturing effect helps protect your sauerkraut from becoming contaminated with mold. If you wish to add other ingredients to your sauerkraut, make sure that the salt can penetrate the cell wall. To do this, make sure the cell wall of the vegetable is broken down either by cooking or massaging. This is why the cabbage needs to be cut thin and tenderized, just as peppers or fennel would need to be. To add something more dense and starchy, such as beets or carrots, either grate them then massage them or cook them (being careful not to overcook) so the salt can penetrate their cell walls more effectively. Most herbs and spices do not need this treatment.
- Using sterilized weights and/or a sterilized plastic utensil such as a spatula to press down your ferment helps to keep a healthy lacto (or lactic acid bacterial) ferment because the pressure helps to push out excessive air pockets, specifically those towards the surface, which could otherwise potentially support acetic acid bacteria (which is more commonly used for vinegar) or mold growth. This is more relevant to less watery ferments such as miso, but it can be helpful to be aware of. Lactic Acid Bacteria (LAB) create CO<sub>2</sub> and acid through metabolising, and this CO<sub>2</sub> creates



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pockets of air below the surface of your ferment. Most harmful bacteria are aerobic (requiring oxygen) and most beneficial bacteria are anaerobic (requiring the absence of oxygen). Although these reactions create CO<sub>2</sub>, and it is actually oxygen (not CO<sub>2</sub>), that would potentially support unwanted microbes, it is still important to address these pockets as they can potentially act as pores which could allow oxygen down into the ferment - proper use of weights or pressing down your ferment to limit the scale of these pockets helps to reduce this risk. This means that these pockets of air can help facilitate contamination if left unaddressed. The need for pressing out excessing air pockets is highest when the fermentation is most active and may go down after a few days if fermentation is slowing down.



Calculating the salt: The amount of salt you will use is 2 - 2.5% the weight of the cabbage after you've removed the core. After you cut out the core, weigh the cabbage that remains, and multiply it by 0.02 to find 2.00% or 0.025 to find 2.25% of the total cabbage weight.



For example, if you have 1,400 grams of cut cabbage, multiply 1,400 by 0.02 or 0.025. This gives us 28 grams at 2.00% or 35 grams of salt at 2.25%.



*Garnish and enjoy!*

