

Food Techniques Lab: Simple Sauerkraut

2 large heads of cabbage (about 5 pounds)
2 to 3 tbsp sea salt or 1/2 cup lemon juice

- Grate 1 cabbage and place in a crock or large pot. Sprinkle half the salt over the cabbage.
- Grate the second cabbage, then add it to the crock along with the rest of the salt.
- Crush the mixture with your hands until liquid comes out of the cabbage freely.
- Place a plate on top of the cabbage, then a weight on top of the plate. (Weight can be a small glass jar filled with water)
- Cover the container and check after 2 days. Scoop the scum off the top, repack and check every 3 days. After 2 weeks, sample the kraut to see if it tastes ready to eat. The flavor will continue to mature for the next several weeks.
- Canning or refrigerating the sauerkraut will extend its shelf life. Yields about 2 quarts.



VARYING THE INGREDIENTS:

As a food preservation technique, fermentation is not an exact science, unlike canning, which requires specific techniques for safety reasons. The proportions in these sauerkraut recipes can be adjusted to taste, including the amount of salt. Salt is a preservative, so using more of it creates a crunchier, longer-lasting sauerkraut. Less salt produces a softer sauerkraut that may not keep as long. Many recipes call for 3 tablespoons salt for every 5 pounds of cabbage, but this can be reduced. No-salt sauerkraut is theoretically possible, but not recommended.

OPTIONAL:

Follow the above recipe, then add:

5 cloves of chopped garlic and 2 sliced onions when you add the salt. or
3 sliced poblano peppers when you add the salt or
5 to 10 chopped Brussels sprouts or
Handful of seaweed, or any other vegetable

