

3-Day Sauerkraut



My mom always makes this recipe in winter, as there are almost no veggies or salad available in Ukraine during the long winter months. Fermented vegetable are all the rage nowadays. Basically, we are coming back to what our ancestors ate just several decades ago, when the refrigeration did not exist or was not available to an average person. Fermented vegetables are rich in prebiotics (great food for your good gut bacteria) and probiotics (Lactobacillus and Bifidobacterium species that live in our tummies), as well as vitamins and other micronutrients.

Of course, there are a lot of fermented vegetables one can find in any health food store. I have two problems with those:

1. They are quite expensive; 2. Most of the fermented veggies on the market are in the plastic cans/bottles. As the acid content of ferments is high, I suspect there is a lot of BPA leaking into the fermented foods. If you choose to buy fermented, buy ferments only in glass bottles and jugs. Also, avoid BPA-free packaging, as BPA is substituted by equally hazardous for your health BPS (Bisphenol-S).

Ingredients:

2 medium heads of cabbage
2 medium carrots
3-4 bay leaves
a few allspice and black pepper balls

Brine

1.5 quarts (liters) water
2 table spoons of sugar
2 table spoons of Himalayan or sea salt

Directions:

1. Boil the water and pour it into Pyrex cup, add salt and sugar and mix while hot. This helps to ensure dissolving the sugar and salt faster. Let it cool.
2. Peel the cabbage of outer leaves and cut it in two halves. Cut finely with the knife or in a food processor.
3. Grate the carrots.
4. Mix grated carrots with the cabbage and add whole allspice, black peppercorns, and bay leaves.
5. Divide the mix into 3 clean quart Mason jars and press the cabbage together.
6. Pour the brine into the Mason jars, so the brine would cover the cabbage mix.
7. Close the jars with the tops but not tightly or cover with the clean cloth.
8. Leave in the sink or on the kitchen counter for 2-3 days to ferment. As the cabbage ferments, the juices may spill over,

so you may put the jars in shallow plates if you decide to keep them on the counter.

9. Make sure that the upper layer of cabbage stays under the brine. Couple times a day, put a wooden skewer stick through to the bottom of the jar to let the fermented gases go through to promote fermentation. The number of days needed for fermentation depends on the temperature in the kitchen. Definitely, it is good to taste the cabbage for crispiness on the 2nd day to decide if one more time is needed for the fermentation.

When the cabbage is ready, close the jars with the cans tightly and put them in the fridge. It is great to eat 1-2 tbsp of fermented cabbage 2-3 times a day as a condiment and a source of prebiotics and probiotics. Add it to salads, or eat it as a salad itself (add some olive oil and finely chopped purple onion).