

Sauerkraut

- cabbage
- kosher salt or sea salt (about 3 teaspoons per quart)
- optional other veggies (onions, carrots, Brussels sprouts, etc.)
- caraway seeds, dill seeds, celery seeds or juniper berries
- tool: glass or ceramic bowl or pot, sufficient for your purposes
- tool: a plate or similar flat surface that will sit tight within the jar or pot
- tool: a weight that will hold down the plate with some force
- tool: a thin towel or cheesecloth or similar cover

Shred your cabbage and put it into a mixing bowl. As you layer the cabbage shake some salt onto it, so the salt gets somewhat evenly distributed.

Shred some other veggies, if you like, and throw those into the bowl. Add in the seeds or juniper berries. Stir.

One handful at a time *pack* your mixture into the glass or ceramic container that it will ferment in. Pack it tight, using fists or heavy implements to drive it down.

Put the tight-fitting plate inside the container, so that it presses firmly down on the sauerkraut.

Put your weight on top of the plate, so that continuous pressure is put on the veggies beneath.

Cover this with the light towel or cheesecloth (or paper towels) to protect the brine from bugs or dust.

Put the whole weighted press contraption that you have built into a cool part of the kitchen; close enough by that you will see it frequently and think to check on it, but far enough out of the way that it won't inconvenience anybody.

Every few hours press down on the weight. You are encouraging the cabbage and other veggies to release the liquid being drawn out of them by the salt, so that they make their own brine as the sauerkraut ferments.

If after 24 hours the liquid has not submerged the sauerkraut yet, you can add some salt water to top it off.

Check the sauerkraut every day or two. If any mold appears on the surface do not fret -- it is spontaneously growing on the top where the brine meets the air rather than on your sauerkraut. Just skim the mold off the surface, and the kraut will be fine.

After 4 to 5 days, you can taste your sauerkraut to see how it's doing. If you like something

powerful and kimchee-like you will be waiting much longer than for a gentler sauerkraut.

Whenever you like it, it's ready. Put it in Mason jars or other containers in cool places, in the fridge, or at friends' houses.

Preparation time: a week or more

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