

Sauerkraut

Both my husband and I grew up eating sauerkraut as a side dish or served on top of hotdogs. Sauerkraut is created through a unique method for preserving known as fermentation. Fermented foods have been shown to provide positive health benefits including improved digestive health and stronger immunity. Fresh sauerkraut can't be beat!



Cabbage:

25 lbs of cabbage (about 5 large heads)
3/4 cup Ball Salt for Pickling and Preserving,
divided

Brine:

1 qt water
1 ½ TB salt

Wash cabbage under cold water, drain. Remove the outer leaves. Keep a few of these for the packing process. Remove core and slice into thin shreds with food processor or knife.



Combine 3 TB pickling salt and 5 pounds shredded cabbage in a large bowl. Mix evenly to coat. Let salted cabbage stand for 30 minutes to 1 hour to let cabbage wilt.

Transfer salted cabbage to pickling container. You can use a 1-gallon glass jar or pottery style crock. Pack firmly into

container, pressing until juice comes to the surface.

Repeat until all cabbage is salted and packed into pickling container, allowing 3-4 inches from top of pickling container. If juice does not cover cabbage, add brine.

To make the brine, combine 1 quart water with 1 ½ TB pickling salt in saucepan, stirring until salt dissolves.

Bring brine to a boil, remove from heat and cool to room temperature before using.

Cover cabbage with 1-2 large cabbage leaves, place fermenting weight or sealed jar on top of cabbage to hold cabbage under brine. You can also use a sealed plastic bag filled with brine as a weight.

Cover container with cheesecloth or tea towel. Store container at 65-70 degrees F for 4-6 weeks, or longer if you prefer.



At the end of the desired fermentation period, you can place container directly into the refrigerator and eat cold like a slaw for 4-6 months.

You can also use water-bath canning as a method to process and store for a longer period.

Water-bath Canning

After fermentation process is complete, place sauerkraut and liquid into a large saucepan and bring mixture to a simmer.



Pack hot sauerkraut into jar, leaving $\frac{1}{2}$ inch headspace. Ladle hot liquid over sauerkraut. Remove air bubbles. Clean jar rim. Add band and lid to fingertip-tight.

Place jar on the rack in a boiling-water canner. Lower rack into canner. Cover jars by 1 inch of water. Process pints for 15 minutes and quarts for 20 minutes. Let jars cool and store.



For recipes and tips, check out resources like the *Ball Blue Book- Guide to Preserving*.

