

MAKING SAUERKRAUT AND SAUERKRAUT RECIPES

Sauerkraut is made from thinly shredded cabbage that is salted and then fermented in its own juice. The first sauerkraut was made in China, about 2,000 years ago, during the building of the Great Wall. The Germans however are known for their kraut. In the 16th century they perfected the fermenting process of mixing salt and cabbage and allowing it to ferment. This process is still used today to make kraut around the world.

Small Batch

5 pounds of shredded cabbage
3 Tablespoons canning or pickling salt

Large Batch

25 pounds shredded cabbage
1 cup canning or pickling salt

Equipment Needed

Fermenting containers should be food grade. One gallon glass or plastic jars work well for a 5-pound batch. Larger crocks or food grade plastic buckets can be used for larger batches. (*Do not use copper, iron or galvanized-metal containers or garbage bags and trash liners.*) Use a very large stainless steel or plastic bowl for mixing cabbage and salt before putting into fermenting container. For shredding cabbage use a large cutting board and sharp knife or kraut cutter.

Making the Sauerkraut

Select mature heads of cabbage that are disease free. The best kraut is made from the mid to late season crop. When picking fresh it is best to wait 1-2 days after harvesting to make the kraut. Kraut can be made from both red and green varieties.

For 5 pounds of shredded cabbage you will need between 6-7 pounds of fresh cabbage. Remove outer leaves and rinse heads with cold water and drain. Cut the heads in halves or quarters and remove the cores, trim and discard any damaged tissues.

Shred or slice cabbage using a sharp knife or kraut cutter. The shreds should be long and thin, about the thickness of a quarter. Place 5-pounds of shredded cabbage in a large bowl and sprinkle 3-Tablespoons salt evenly over cabbage. With clean hands thoroughly mix the salt into the cabbage. You will notice cabbage will begin to wilt as the salt is mixed in. When all the salt is dissolved and the cabbage is juicy, begin packing the cabbage firmly into the food grade fermenting container. Use your fist or wooden mallet to firmly and evenly press the cabbage into the jar or crock. As you pack you will notice the juice coming from the cabbage. You will need enough juice to cover the cabbage. It is important to leave at least 4-5 inches of head space.

For larger batches repeat the steps above in 5-pound batches and continue pressing the kraut into the crock leaving 4-5 inches of head space between the cabbage and the top of the crock.

Once the fermenting container is adequately filled and the juice is covering the cabbage you are ready to put a weight on the kraut to keep the liquid covering the cabbage during the fermentation period. Be sure to wipe the edges of the jar or crock before putting the weight on top.

When fermenting in a glass jar you can weigh down the kraut using a freezer weight plastic bag filled with brine made of 1½ tablespoons salt to 1 quart of water. For crocks use a plate and weigh it down with a jar of water or a plastic bag filled with brine. The amount of brine in the plastic bag can be adjusted to give enough pressure to keep the fermenting cabbage covered with brine.

Once the weight is in place cover the fermenting container with a clean tea towel or cheese cloth to reduce mold growth. For glass containers you can cover the jar with a brown paper bag to keep the light off of the kraut while it is fermenting. This helps retain nutrients and also preserves the color of the kraut.

Fermentation Temperature and Management

Store at 70-75°F while fermenting. At temperatures between 70-75°F sauerkraut will be fully fermented in about 3-4 weeks; at 60-65°F fermentation may take 5-6 weeks. At temperatures lower than 60°F sauerkraut may not ferment. Above 75°F sauerkraut may become soft. The smaller the fermenting container the faster it will ferment.

If you weigh the cabbage down with a brine-filled bag, do not disturb the crock until normal fermentation is completed. If you use a plate and jar as weight, you will have to check the sauerkraut 2-3 times each week and remove scum if it forms. A good test to see if kraut is ready is to smell and taste it. It should smell and taste like kraut not sour cabbage.

Preserving Kraut

When kraut is fermented it is ready to eat. Fully fermented sauerkraut may be kept tightly covered in the refrigerator for several months or it may be canned or frozen for long term storage.

Canning Instructions

Hot Pack: Bring sauerkraut and liquid slowly to a boil in a large kettle, stirring frequently. Remove from heat and fill jars rather firmly with sauerkraut and juices, leaving ½ inch headspace. Adjust lids and process. (See time below.)

Raw Pack: Fill jars firmly with cold sauerkraut, and cover with juices, leaving ½ inch headspace. Adjust lids and process. (See time below.)

RECOMMENDED PROCESSING TIME FOR SAUERKRAUT IN A BOILING WATER CANNER

Style of Pack	Jar Size	Processing Time at Altitudes of			
		0-1000 ft.	1001 -3000 ft.	3001 - 6000 ft.	6001 - 8000 ft.
Hot	Pints	10 min	15 min	15 min	20 min
	Quarts	15 min	20 min	20 min	25 min
Raw	Pints	20 min	25 min	30 min	35 min
	Quarts	25 min	30 min	35 min	40 min

Freezing: Pack kraut into freezer bags or containers, label and freeze.

Tips

- Never reduce the salt when making kraut. If the finished product is too salty it can be rinsed in cold water before serving.
- Drain well before using.
- Store canned sauerkraut in a cool, dark place.

Using Kraut

Sauerkraut is low in calories and fat free. One cup of undrained sauerkraut has 44 calories, and one cup of sauerkraut juice has 22 calories. It provides almost one-third of the US RDA for vitamin C, plus other important nutrients, including iron, calcium, potassium, phosphorus, thiamin, riboflavin and niacin. One cup also provides approximately 8 grams of fiber.

Sauerkraut can be served in many ways. It is often eaten with hot dogs and sausages. It can be served cooked with one or two tart apples which have been peeled, cored and chopped into small pieces and heated with the kraut. Another way to serve kraut is to mash it with potatoes and serve as a side dish.

SAUERKRAUT RECIPES

PIZZA

Pizza dough (recipe below) or use your favorite pizza dough, or lightly toast English muffins for individual pizzas.

- Pizza sauce (Use a commercial sauce or make your own.)
- Combination of cheeses (Cheddar, Mozzarella, Jack, etc.)
- Sauerkraut
- Assortment of favorite toppings such as sausage, ham, olives, chopped peppers and onions
- Top with more cheese



Pizza Dough (12-13 inch pizza pan)

For 1 pizza, 4-6 servings, you will need:

1 pkg. active dry yeast	½ t. salt
⅔ cup warm water	3 T. olive oil
2 t. sugar	2 cups all-purpose flour (approx.)

Preparation:

1. Sprinkle yeast over water in a large bowl. Let stand 3-5 minutes. Stir in sugar, salt, and 1 T. of the oil. Add 1⅓ cups of the flour. Mix to blend; beat until dough is elastic and pulls away from sides of bowl, about 3 minutes.
2. Stir in ½ cup more flour to make a soft dough.
3. Place on floured surface. Knead until dough is smooth and develops small bubbles just under surface, 8-10 minutes. Place dough in greased bowl, turning to grease all over. Cover; let rise in a warm place until doubled, 30-45 minutes.
4. Punch dough down, then roll or pat into a greased 12½-13 inch pizza pan. Spread pizza sauce on dough and layer rest of ingredients in order they are listed above.
5. Bake in preheated 400°F oven for 15-20 minutes or until the crust is brown. Cut in wedges to serve. For English muffin pizzas bake in 400°F oven for 10-15 minutes or until the cheese is melted and lightly brown.

CHICKEN WITH A BITE

1 (2½ -3 lb.) fryer, cut up
6 medium red potatoes, quartered
2 cups sauerkraut, rinsed and drained
1 cup apple juice

½ t. curry powder
½ t. ginger
¼ cup brown sugar
salt and pepper to taste



Fry chicken in a small amount of oil until brown. Drain fat. Add drained sauerkraut, potatoes, salt, and pepper. Mix apple juice with curry powder, ginger, and brown sugar. Pour over chicken and simmer for 45-minutes or until chicken is tender.

LAZY DAY POT ROAST

1 tart cooking apple, cored and thinly sliced
1 lean boneless chuck roast, about 3 lbs.
1⅞ ounce envelope onion gravy mix or
brown gravy mix*

2 cups sauerkraut, rinsed and drained
¼ cup firmly packed light brown sugar
1 (28 ounce) can tomatoes

Slow Cooker Directions:

Place apple slices in bottom of slow cooker. Remove visible fat from roast. Cut roast in half and place on top of apples. Add tomatoes, sauerkraut and brown sugar. Cover tightly and cook on high 1-2 hours. Reduce heat to low. Cook 5-6 hours or until meat is tender. Skim off excess fat. Stir in gravy mix and heat, covered, 15 minutes. Stir once or twice. Yields 6-8 servings.

Range top directions:

Remove visible fat from roast. Place roast in Dutch oven. Add tomatoes, sauerkraut, brown sugar and apple; cover and simmer 2½-3 hours or until meat is tender. Remove from heat; skim off excess fat. Stir in gravy mix; heat to boiling, stirring, until gravy thickens. Add a little more water if gravy is too thick.

Oven directions:

Use range top directions, except bake covered at 350°F for 2½-3 hours.

*Can also thicken with flour and water mixture and season with beef bouillon or au jus mix.

GERMAN CHOWDER

2 cups chicken broth
½ cup onion
¼ cup green peppers
½ cup celery
3 T. flour

1 cup sauerkraut
1 cup cooked corned beef
1 cup grated cheese
¼ cup butter
2 cups half-n-half

Put chicken broth, onion, celery and green peppers in a pan and cook for 10-20 minutes or until vegetables are tender. In another pan melt butter and mix in flour and add half-n-half until creamy. Add hot broth mixture, sauerkraut, corned beef and grated cheese. Simmer for 5 minutes.



Recipe courtesy of Donna Crosiar, OSU Extension Service Family Food Education Volunteer

SAUERKRAUT POTATO SOUP

1 large onion, chopped
3 slices bacon, diced
4 large potatoes, diced
2 cups sauerkraut, rinsed, drained and chopped
½ t. caraway seeds

1 t. sugar
salt to taste
2 cups dairy sour cream
1 T. flour

Sauté onion and bacon and drain fat. Add potatoes and 3-cups water. Bring to boil and simmer until tender. Add sauerkraut, caraway seeds, sugar, and salt. Boil for 15 minutes. Mix sour cream and flour together. Fold sour cream and flour mixture into soup and simmer until thickened. (Do not boil.)

LAYERED POTATO SAUERKRAUT SALAD

4 medium potatoes, cooked, cubed
2 cups red or white sauerkraut rinsed & drained
¼ t. dill weed
2 (6½ ounce) cans tuna, drained

4 cups chopped lettuce
2 medium tomatoes, chopped
1 large cucumber, diced
½ t. salt

Cook potatoes and cube. Combine sauerkraut and potatoes. Sprinkle with ½ teaspoon salt. Refrigerate. Toss tuna with dill weed and refrigerate. Layer lettuce, cooled potato sauerkraut mixture, tuna, tomatoes, and cucumbers. Top with 1 cup for the dressing (recipe follows). Serve remaining dressing in bowl. (Salad can also be served tossed and not layered.)

Dressing:

1 cup salad dressing or mayonnaise
1 cup sour cream
½ cup buttermilk
½ cup chopped dill pickles
2 T. grated onion

½ t. dry mustard
½ t. dill weed
1 t. salt
¼ t. pepper



Mix and pour over salad. Makes about 2½ cups.

CHOCOLATE SAUERKRAUT CAKE

⅔ cup margarine
1½ cups sugar
3 eggs
1 t. vanilla
½ cup unsweetened cocoa
2¼ cups sifted all-purpose flour



1 t. baking powder
1 t. baking soda
¼ t. salt
1 cup water
1 cup sauerkraut, rinsed and drained

Thoroughly cream margarine with sugar. Beat in eggs and vanilla. Sift together dry ingredients; add alternately with water to creamed mixture. Stir in sauerkraut. Pour into two greased and floured 9 inch round pans or one 9 x 13 inch cake pan. Bake in 350°F oven for 25-30 minutes. Frost with your favorite frosting.

Compiled by Nellie Oehler, OSU/Lane County Extension Faculty, Revised March 2006