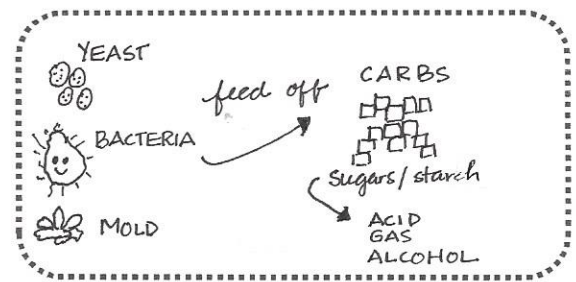


# HOW TO FERMENT YOUR VEGETABLE GARDEN HARVEST

Fermentation is one of the many ways to preserve your harvest. It is also one of the best ways to retain the natural nutrients in raw living foods. Unlike other preservation methods that require cooking to some extent, fermentation uses salts and natural bacteria that generate lactic acid. These bacteria provide many digestive and gut health benefits by producing probiotics that strengthen your digestive organs and improve enzyme activity.



Fermented foods have also been claimed to “reduce risk of cardiovascular disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, obesity and inflammation. They have also been linked to better weight management, better mood and brain activity, increased bone health and better recovery after exercise.”

To get started find a recipe you want to try and follow the instructions below.

**Step 1: Prepare Vegetables** – You can cut your vegetables or ferment them whole. The larger the vegetable, the longer it will take to be ready to eat. Whether you decide to chop, grate, shred, slice, or leave your vegetable whole, maintain similar sizing throughout your container. This will allow your fermentation to mature evenly. Add your prepared vegetables to your mason jar.

**Step 2: Prepare the Brine** – Salt is used to enhance flavor and to stop the bad bacteria from growing. Avoid iodized or table salt as this may kill your needed bacteria. Instead, use kosher, pickling, Celtic sea, Himalayan, or pure sea salt. Always use clean water free of potential contaminants that lead to unwanted bacteria or mold.

*About 1<sup>lb</sup> vegetables / quart + 2 cups brine*

NOTE: Salt has different densities

$$\text{WEIGHT OF FOOD (grams)} \times .025 = \text{SALT (grams)}$$

(2.5%)

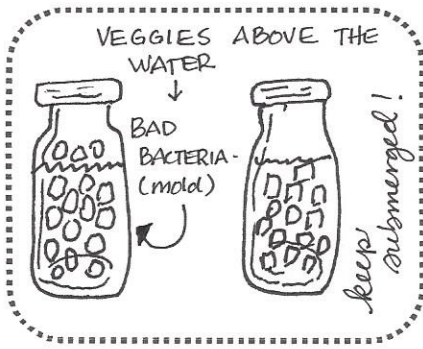
- **Salt Brine** – Add 1 tablespoons of salt to a 2 cups of filtered or spring water. Add the liquid mixture to your vegetables until they are completely covered. **SALT TO TASTE** – a wide range of opinion on the amount of salt – most suggest you need about a 2-3% salt/water-vegetable mixture.

- **Dry Salt/Wild Fermentation** – Add salt to your prepared vegetables that have been shredded or diced to withdraw the natural liquids to form your brine. The naturally occurring bacteria in vegetables like cabbage will generate the starter culture. You should see enough liquid to cover your vegetables within a few hours. If there is insufficient liquid, supplement with clean

*– massage or pound –*



water until your vegetables are covered and continue the process. **Most sources say about 1 T salt per medium/large head of cabbage.**

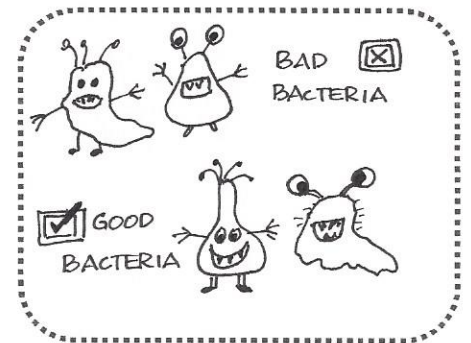


**Step 3: Weigh the Vegetables Down** - It is important that the vegetables be completely submerged in the brine. If they have contact with air, the natural maturing process will continue allowing mold to appear. There are a variety of ways that this can be done - purchased weights, plastic bag with water, a cabbage leaf, etc. The acidic environment of the brine will prevent mold from forming, thus preserving the vegetables and their naturally occurring nutrients.

Remember LACTO-FERMENTATION is an ANAEROBIC process (without oxygen)

### Stages of Fermenting

1. Microbes set in to kill off bad bacteria - about 24 hours
  2. Lactobacillus begins converting sugars to acids - about 2-3 days
  3. Aging process - developing more acid ( $\text{CO}_2$ ) - about 4 days to 4 weeks
- NOTE: *Keep jars on tray* → OVER-SPILL



**When Are Vegetables Done Fermenting?** - There are three signals you want to check to know your fermentation is ready for storage. The first is bubbling throughout the container. The bubbling is caused by the active bacteria releasing gasses created from forming the lactic acid. The second signal is a pleasant, vinegar-like sour aroma when opening the container. If your fermentation ever smells rotten, it should be thrown away. Third, check for a desirable flavor. If you can observe bubbling, check your fermentation after as little as 3-4 days. Continue to check daily if the flavor is not yet to your liking.

IDEAL FERMENTING TEMP = 65-70°

**How to Store Fermented Vegetables** - It is important to start storing your fermented vegetables in a cool location as soon as the taste is to your liking. Storing it in a cool location will slow the fermentation process. The process does not stop, which affects the shelf-life of your product depending on how cool your storage location is. The ideal locations include a fridge, cellar, cool basement, or wine cooler. Fermentations may last as little as a few weeks or as long as 18 months. You will know if your mixture is bad by the rotting, rancid smell. It may also start to appear brown and slimy in texture.