



# KRAUT MAKING BASICS

The Sweet Farm

5 LBS VEGETABLES	1 OZ (~3 tbsp) SALT	1-3 TSP SPICES	EQUIPMENT
Cabbage Beets Carrots Turnips Radishes Apples Hardy leafy greens Cauliflower Onions Garlic Ginger Celeriac Fennel	Celtic Sea Salt® Real Salt® Sea Salt Pickling Salt Kosher Salt  DO NOT USE Table Salt Iodized Salt	Caraway seeds Juniper berries Red chili flakes Black pepper Cumin seeds Seaweed Mustard seed Celery seed Spice powders or blends Fresh or dried herbs	Cutting board and knife Food processor (optional) Mandolin (optional) Large mixing bowl Peeler Grater  FERMENTATION VESSEL Ceramic crock Mason jar with lid Plastic bucket with lid  Airlock lid (optional)
<b>THIS WILL MAKE ABOUT A GALLON OF KRAUT. ADJUST QUANTITIES ACCORDINGLY.</b>			

- 1) If using cabbage, wash and core cabbage. Wash other vegetables. You can peel root veggies if you like, though it is not necessary. Chop or grate cabbage and other vegetables, finely or coarsely, however you like it. Place veggies in a large mixing bowl. Sprinkle salt on the veggies as you add them to the bowl.
- 2) Once all the veggies are chopped and salted, add your desired spices. Mix and pound the veggie mixture with your fists or wooden mallet. This releases the juices from the cabbage to create a brine. If there is not enough brine, add a little bit of water to the mixture.
- 3) Once well pounded, pack the mixture tightly into your fermentation vessel. Make sure the liquid comes above the solids, and all air bubbles are released. If possible, weigh the mixture down with a plate or smaller jar filled with water. You want to keep the level of brine above the level of the kraut solids. Put a lid loosely on the vessel, cover it with a cloth, or place an airlock lid on it (best option!).
- 4) Place your kraut jar in a cool, dark place where you won't forget about it! Check your kraut every 5-7 days. Taste the kraut. If you like it, eat it! If you want it more sour, let it ferment longer. Some people like a young ferment, and some like an old one, it's totally up to you. Once it reaches the taste you like, place the kraut in the fridge, and enjoy!



# HERE COMES TROUBLE!

## AND WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT...

There are two main “problems” beginners run into with their ferments: mold on the surface, and too much salt. Neither of these is actually a problem, and can be remedied pretty quickly. If your ferment has truly gone bad, don’t worry, you’ll know (pee yew)!

### MOLD

Kraut is anaerobic, meaning the fermentation works in the absence of oxygen. Mold, in the other hand, is aerobic, so it needs oxygen to survive. Mold forms on the kraut’s surface wherever solids meet the air. That is why it is important to keep your kraut or pickles submerged under the brine. Here are some scenarios you might encounter, and what to do about them:

- 1) The kraut surface has dried out and is molding: scrape off and discard the moldy parts, then re-press the kraut down under its brine. If necessary, add a little bit of water.
- 2) There is mold floating on top of the brine: Simply skim the mold off the surface. No need to re-press or add water.
- 3) The kraut surface looks okay, but is really soft and mushy to the touch: scrape and discard the mushy kraut. When you get down to good kraut, re-press and add water if necessary.

### SALT LEVEL

New fermenters commonly throw out their first batch of kraut or pickles because they are too salty. If your ferment is too salty, do not despair, it is usually salvageable. Follow these steps to finding the perfect salt level for you:

- 1) Drain the brine from your ferment, reserving the liquid. If your ferment is just a little too salty, drain half the brine; if it is way too salty, drain it all.
- 2) Add fresh water back in and wait a few hours to a day for the salt level to equalize.
- 3) Taste your ferment. If you like it, stop there. If not,
- 4) Add the reserved brine back into your ferment little by little, until you achieve the salt level you like.
- 5) If your ferment is WAY too salty, repeat steps 1 and 2 until it tastes good to you.



# FERMENTATION RESOURCES

## THE SWEET FARM

[www.thesweetfarm.com](http://www.thesweetfarm.com): home of Sweet Farm Sauerkraut. We offer basic fermentation workshops, private classes, special event vending, and we're always happy to answer your fermentation questions. You can reach us through the website, or email Rachel directly at [rachel@thesweetfarm.com](mailto:rachel@thesweetfarm.com).

[www.wildfermentation.com](http://www.wildfermentation.com): A great resource for all things fermented. Its creator, Sandor Katz, is the "guru" of the modern fermentation movement. He's got great recipes and information. He also travels around giving talks and workshops. If you're ever able to see him, or even travel to his center in Tennessee, I highly recommend it.

Wild Fermentation and The Art of Fermentation, by Sandor Katz, are both wonderful print resources. I especially recommend Wild Fermentation for beginning fermenters. It covers everything from vegetable fermentation to dairy cultures to wine and mead.

[www.culturesforhealth.com](http://www.culturesforhealth.com): the place to purchase cultures online. Get kefir grains, sourdough starters, yogurt starters, kombucha mothers, and more. They also have a really great email newsletter with tips, tricks, recipes and support.

[www.fermentationrecipes.com](http://www.fermentationrecipes.com): an archive of tons of fermentation recipes. Try something straight from their pages, or find inspiration for your own creations.

[www.nourishedkitchen.com](http://www.nourishedkitchen.com): a wonderful blog about cooking with whole foods. I include it here because she often features simple fermented recipes, as well as gives you ideas on how to use them in your daily meals.

[www.pickl-it.com](http://www.pickl-it.com): a great resource for the "technical" side of fermenting. Their blog is interesting, and helpful for understanding all the science behind fermentation. Their fermentation products are high quality, and their staff is extremely knowledgeable. Bookmark this page for their handy "Brine Calculator" alone!

[www.facebook.com/wildfermentation](https://www.facebook.com/wildfermentation): a huge group of fermenters from all over the world. Members range from total beginners to experts. If you've got a question, someone here has an answer. Look at their archived information, or scroll through posts for recipe ideas, troubleshooting, and more.