



Red Sauerkraut

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Fermentation Time: 16 days

Yield: 5 pints

Ingredients

- 1500 grams purple cabbage, including the outer leaves used to cover the sauerkraut
- 37.5 grams salt (2.5% of the cabbage weight)
- 2.5% salt-water brine, as needed for the fermentation weight

Instructions

1. Rinse the cabbage and remove the core.
2. Weigh the cabbage. For this batch, the cabbage weighed 1500 grams.
3. Calculate the salt needed based on the weight of the cabbage. For 2.5% salt, 1500 grams of cabbage requires 37.5 grams of salt.
4. Remove the outer cabbage leaves and set them aside. These leaves will be used later to cover the sliced cabbage and should be included in the total cabbage weight when calculating the amount of salt.
5. Cut the cabbage into pieces small enough to fit into a food processor. Using the slicing blade, slice all of the cabbage.
6. Place some of the sliced cabbage into a large bowl and sprinkle some of the salt over it. Add more cabbage and more salt until all of the cabbage and salt have been added.
7. Mix the cabbage and salt together and let it sit for about 30 minutes. This gives the salt time to begin drawing moisture from the cabbage.
8. After 30 minutes, crush and squeeze the cabbage by hand for about 20 minutes to release as much juice as possible. If your hands get tired, take a break and then continue working the cabbage. The goal is to release enough juice to completely cover the cabbage.
9. Place the cabbage and all of the juice into a clean one-gallon container.
10. Lay the reserved outer cabbage leaves over the sliced cabbage and press everything down firmly. Place a freezer bag over the cabbage and fill the bag with 2.5% salt-water brine. The bag acts as a weight to keep the cabbage submerged, even if the brine already covers the cabbage. Cover the container with a clean towel to keep out bugs and dirt.
11. Check the sauerkraut after several hours. As the cabbage releases more juice, the brine should rise and completely cover the cabbage and the leaves.
12. Check the sauerkraut every day during fermentation and make sure the cabbage remains completely submerged under the brine.
13. Ferment for approximately 16 days, or until the sauerkraut reaches the desired flavor and texture. For this batch, a small amount of white growth appeared on the edge of one of the cabbage leaves on day 12. That portion of the leaf was removed and fermentation continued.
14. On day 16, taste the sauerkraut. When the desired level of sourness is reached and before the cabbage loses too much crunch, stop the fermentation.
15. Pack the finished sauerkraut into 5 clean pint jars, cover with lids, and refrigerate.

Salt Amount

Salt for sauerkraut can range from 1.5% to 2.5% of the weight of the cabbage. This recipe uses 2.5% salt, which produces a fairly salty sauerkraut. For your first batch, 2% salt is a good place to start, and you can adjust the amount in future batches to suit your taste.

Optional Water-Bath Canning

If you want to store the finished sauerkraut at room temperature instead of refrigerating it, you can process it in a boiling water bath. You can use either the raw-pack or hot-pack method.

Raw Pack

1. Pack the fermented sauerkraut into 5 clean, hot pint jars, leaving ½ inch headspace.
2. Ladle the sauerkraut brine over the cabbage, keeping the sauerkraut covered while maintaining ½ inch headspace.
3. Remove air bubbles with a nonmetallic spatula or bubble remover.
4. Wipe the jar rims clean. Place the prepared lids on the jars and screw on the bands until fingertip tight.
5. Place the jars into a boiling water bath. Make sure the water covers the jars by at least 1 inch.
6. Bring the water back to a full boil and process pint jars for 10 minutes. Adjust processing time for altitude according to current canning guidelines.
7. When processing is complete, remove the jars and place them upright on a towel. Leave them undisturbed for 12 to 24 hours.
8. Check the seals. Refrigerate and use any jar that has not sealed. Remove the bands from sealed jars, wipe the jars clean, label, and store in a cool, dark place.

Hot Pack

1. Place the fermented sauerkraut and its brine into a large pot.
2. Slowly heat the sauerkraut and brine to a simmer, stirring occasionally. Heat thoroughly without cooking the sauerkraut for an extended period.
3. Ladle the hot sauerkraut and brine into 5 clean, hot pint jars, leaving ½ inch headspace.
4. Remove air bubbles with a nonmetallic spatula or bubble remover.
5. Wipe the jar rims clean. Place the prepared lids on the jars and screw on the bands until fingertip tight.
6. Place the jars into a boiling water bath. Make sure the water covers the jars by at least 1 inch.
7. Bring the water back to a full boil and process pint jars for 10 minutes. Adjust processing time for altitude according to current canning guidelines.
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Note: Fermentation creates probiotics. The heat from water-bath canning kills the live probiotics, but the heat also creates postbiotics from the probiotics produced during fermentation.

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