

Sauerkraut

50 pounds cabbage
1 pound canning salt

Remove outer leaves and any undesirable portions from firm, mature heads of cabbage; wash and drain. Cut into halves or quarters; remove core. Use a shredder or sharp knife to cut cabbage into thin shreds about the thickness of a dime. In a large bowl, thoroughly mix 3 tablespoons salt with 5 pounds shredded cabbage. Let salted cabbage stand for several minutes to wilt slightly; this allows packing without excessive breaking or bruising of the shreds. Pack salted cabbage firmly and evenly into a large, clean pickling container. Using a wooden spoon, tamper or hands, press down firmly until the juice comes to the surface. Repeat shredding, salting and packing of cabbage until the container is filled to within 3 to 4 inches of the top. If juice does not cover cabbage, add brine: 1 ½ tablespoons salt to 1 quart water; bring brine to a boil; cool. Cover cabbage with muslin or cheesecloth and tuck edges down against the inside of the container. Weight cabbage under brine. Formation of gas bubbles indicates fermentation is taking place. Remove and discard scum formation each day. A room temperature of 70° to 75°F is best for fermenting cabbage. Fermentation is usually complete in 3 to 6 weeks.

To Can: Bring sauerkraut to a simmer (185° - 210°F) Do not boil. Pack hot cabbage into hot jars, leaving ½ inch headspace. Ladle hot liquid over cabbage, leaving ½ inch headspace. Remove air bubbles. Adjust two-piece caps. Process pints 15 minutes, quarts 20 minutes, in a boiling-water canner. Yield: about 36 pints or 18 quarts.

Spicy Sauerkraut

8 - 10 cups shredded cabbage, loosely packed
(about 2 lbs)
10 juniper berries
1 tsp caraway seeds
1 tsp yellow mustard seeds
1 - 2 tsp un-iodized or pickling salt
1 cup filtered water mixed with 1 tsp salt

In a clean, non-metallic bowl, mix cabbage, juniper berries, caraway, mustard seeds, and salt. Stir cabbage to release juices. Let rest 10 minutes then mix again. You may let this rest longer (1 - 2 hours) if needed.

Sterilize jar and lid by boiling for several minutes in water and draining on a clean dishcloth.

Pack into a sterilized quart-sized, wide-mouthed jar, pushing down with a wooden mallet. Add filtered, or non-chlorinated, salty (1 teaspoon salt per cup of water) water to rim of jar and cap loosely with a sterilized canning lid.

Place jar on a tray to catch overflowing juices. Keep jar between 65°F and 72°F for 2-3 weeks.

After bubbling stops, check container and top off with salty (1 teaspoon salt per cup of water, warm slightly to dissolve completely) water if level falls below rim. Skim any (harmless) white spots or film from the top, close jar tightly, wipe off outside of jar and store in the refrigerator until you use it up.

Interesting Facts: German sauerkraut is made using salt, whereas Kimchi is made with rice wine. Both create a favorable environment for fermentation. Canned sauerkraut should be rinsed in a colander prior to eating, to reduce the briny flavor, but fresh sauerkraut does not have to be. Sauerkraut may be eaten raw, as a garnish or salad, or cooked, with apples, bacon and onions. It is low in calories, too.