

Kimchi



Fermented vegetables are a staple in our house. We eat them pretty much everyday. Although we enjoy anything fermented, it wasn't until I got into making kimchi that I found my absolute favourite! Sour with a spicy kick, this too could become one of your favourite staples.

Ingredients:

- 10 small heads of green or savoy cabbage (I like to use both) (Save outside cabbage leaves for later use)
- 1 bag of carrots (2 lbs)
- 3 daikon radishes
- large chunk of fresh ginger (I use about 3")
- 4 bunches swiss chard or bok choy (finely chopped)
- 3 green apples
- 1 bunch green onions (chopped)
- 14 large cloves garlic (minced)
- 4 tsp red pepper flakes
- 4 tsp paprika
- 2 1/2 tsp smoked paprika
- 1/8 cup + 1/8 cup sea salt
- culture starter of your choice (I use this Body Ecology Culture Starter)

Directions:

Shred all your cabbage, carrots, daikon radishes, and green apples and add to LARGE mixing bowl (I actually use a Tupperware bin).

Add chopped swiss chard, green onions, grated ginger, and minced garlic. Add in red pepper flakes and paprika. Mix well.

Now it's time to make your brine. If using a culture starter, following the instructions in the package or read the note below. You'll need to get your starter blooming.

In a blender, blend 1 cup of your veggie mixture, 4 cups water, and 1/8 cup of sea salt. Once blended, add 1/2 of your bloomed culture starter. Pulse just to lightly mix. Pour mixture over veggies. Mix thoroughly. I like to mix with my hands and almost massage all the ingredients together. Repeat this process for another batch of brine. You'll want to have enough brine that you have small pools of liquid forming at the bottom of your mixing bowl. You may need to add more water (depending on how many vegetables you used). Massage in and mix well.

Stuff clean mason jars with this mixture, leaving about 1.5 inches at the top (This is VERY important, as if ferments it will need this space. If you over fill your jars they could build up enough pressure to explode and create a horrendous mess). Make sure liquid pools at the top of the jar when you apply pressure to your veggies ... you want your vegetable mixture to be fermenting in liquid.

Roll up your leftover cabbage leaves to place at the top of each jar. Press down until liquid just starts running over your cabbage leaves. Seal tightly and wipe the jars clean.

Let sit at room temperature (72F or higher) for at least 1 week. I like to wrap the jars in towels in a warm spot (usually my heated cement floor in my basement beside the fridge or freezer). The longer you leave them, the better they taste and more probiotic rich they become! I usually leave them to ferment 3-4 weeks.

Once they are to your liking, move to the fridge for storage where they will be good for at least one year (if they last

that long). Note that they must be stored in the refrigerator (not in a cold room) once they are fermented.

We LOVE having our kimchi with fried fresh farm eggs. Delish!!

*****Using a culture starter:**

To make a batch of sauerkraut, a starter is not absolutely necessary. The natural sugars in the veggies will help break it down and render a batch of probiotic goodness. However, if you want to ensure you get a vigorous fermentation, you can dissolve a package of starter culture (a probiotic capsule will also work) in 1/4 cup of warm water (90F). Add a small amount of sugar to feed the starter (ie. cane sugar, honey) and let it sit for 20 minutes or longer to activate.

Tips & Ideas:

This recipe can easily be adapted to your liking.

For anyone who dislikes the taste of onions, you can easily omit the green onions.

Baby bok choy can be added or substituted for the swiss chard.

Cayenne pepper can be used instead of red pepper flakes. Although CAUTION – use a lot less as its much more potent.

This recipe makes about 28 quarts/jars. I love to get together with a friend or two for an afternoon to make this recipe. Makes it feel like WAY less work, you can share the cost, and won't need to find room in your fridge for 28 jars!!