

## Two Fermenting Recipes to Get You Started



### PRIZED SAUERKRAUT

Fermentation occurs naturally in nature. Humans have harnessed this process and turned it into an art form. The ancient Greeks even termed it alchemy.

This recipe hails from Ancient Rome. In 50 B.C., Pliny described two recipes for Sauerkraut. I am going to give you the simpler of the two so you can master the basic technique, but I will also include suggestions for future additions. So what do you need for an ancient, alchemical superfood?

Drumroll...

Cabbage and salt.

Yes, it really is that simple. Begin with a large head of cabbage, or 2 small cabbages (one green and one red) for a hot pink kraut.

- 1) Quarter the cabbage and remove the hard core.
- 2) Thinly slice the cabbage and place in a large mixing bowl.
- 3) Sprinkle the salt (2-3 tbs) over the sliced cabbage in layers (a layer of cabbage, a layer of salt, etc.).
- 4) Using your hands, massage and squeeze the salted cabbage to release its juices. If you don't want to use your hands, you can use a wooden masher to stab and pound the cabbage until it's sufficiently juicy.
- 5) Give it a taste. It should taste salty, but not too salty. The saltiness will mellow out over time as the cabbage ferments.
- 6) Pack the contents into a glass jar or ceramic crock. Push the cabbage down until the brine rises up and over the cabbage.
- 7) You can use weights or a sterile rock to weigh the cabbage down so it stays under the brine.
- 8) Cover with a lid or cloth. If using a lid, unscrew it from time to time to release any pressure that builds up.
- 9) Wait. Give it a taste after a few days, after a week or longer. Whenever it tastes right to you, transfer it to the fridge. It will continue to age and develop at a slower pace when refrigerated.

If any scum or mold develops on the surface of the brine, simply scrape it off. The kraut under the brine is still safe to eat.

Fun additions to add to your kraut next time:

Caraway seeds, juniper berries, apple slices, cranberries, cooled mashed potatoes, onions, garlic, carrots, dandelion greens from your backyard... The possibilities are endless.

## GINGER BUG



One of my favorites, this one is so easy and can be used as a starter culture for just about anything.

To make a ginger bug, all you need is 3 ingredients to get started:

\*fresh, organic ginger root

\*sugar (preferably a raw form for mineral content)

\*filtered or spring water

Directions:

1) Dice the ginger root, leaving the peel intact, until you have a couple tablespoons. Put this into a quart size glass jar.

2) Add a couple tablespoons of sugar to the jar.

3) Fill the jar to about halfway with water (2 cups).

4) Using a wooden spoon, stir, stir, stir.

5) Cover with a cloth or paper coffee filter and secure with a rubber band or jar ring.

6) Store the jar in a dark, airy cupboard.

7) Every day, add about a tablespoon each of grated ginger root and sugar and stir with a wooden spoon.

After a few days, you should have a living, bubbling concoction. At this point it is "active" and ready to use. Once active, it only needs a teaspoon of sugar and a good stir each day.\*

To use:

1) To every quart of fruit juice, sweetened tea, or any condiment you wish to ferment, add 1/4 cup ginger bug, stir, and cover with something breathable.

2) Stir the mixture every day for 3 days (longer for cooler temps). At this point it should bubble and fizz when stirred.

3) Once it is fizzy, it is ready to be bottled in flip top soda bottles\*\* (if you want lots of carbonation), or any jar with a tight seal.

4) Once bottled, leave at room temperature for an extra 12-24 hours (if you want more carbonation) and transfer to the fridge or cellar.

You now have a living food, and it will continue to slowly ferment at cooler temperatures. The flavor will continue to mature, and there may even be a little alcohol content produced as yeasts eat sugar and produce alcohol. This is minimal, and actually beneficial to the body. Fermented foods can last for months, if not years, but I've never stored anything longer than a few months because we love fermented foods in my house.

5) The last step is to replenish what you used from your bug. Add enough water to replace what you used, a teaspoon of sugar, and stir. In warmer temperatures, it should be ready to use again the very next day.

\*If you're not going to use your ginger bug right away, you can feed it a teaspoon of sugar, seal with a lid, and stick it in the fridge for a week before it needs to be fed again.

When ready to use, remove from the fridge, feed, stir, and cover with something breathable. As it warms up, it should become bubbly and active again.

\*\*If using flip top bottles, add a couple raisins. When they float to the top, you'll know it's carbonated and time to transfer to a cooler setting to slow things down and avoid exploding bottles.

I hope these recipes get you started on your fermenting journey!

Lauren