

fermented vegetables

makes approximately 1 quart

equipment

- 1 1-quart jar with a tight-fitting lid – being the queen of repurposing, I prefer a 2.5-lb honey jar with a wide mouth.
- smaller jar with a lid – the base of the jar should fit easily into the mouth of the large jar
- large glass or stainless steel bowl

ingredients

- ½-1 head red or green cabbage, cut into thin strips or small dice
- 2¼ tsp sea salt

method

1. Make sure that your cutting board, knife, bowls, jars, and lids are washed with hot, soapy water, rinsed with hot water, and air-dried or dried with a clean kitchen towel.
2. In the large glass or stainless steel bowl, combine the cabbage with the salt, using your hands to massage until salt is mixed in well.
3. Let stand for 30 m (or more) at room temperature.
4. Squeeze out the cabbage over the bowl, saving the liquid, then pack it into the large jar, pushing down on it with your hands.
5. Pour the liquid over. (I know, it seems odd to remove the liquid, then add it back!)
6. Place the large jar on a plate to collect overflow, fill the smaller jar with water, cover it, and use it as a weight to gently push down on the cabbage. The liquid in the large jar should rise to cover the cabbage. If it doesn't, don't despair – keep giving the small jar a push whenever you walk past it. If within 24 hours you still don't have enough liquid, mix some sea salt with filtered water (1 tsp salt: 1 c water) and add just enough to cover the veggies.
7. Let the jar stand at room temp out of direct sun for 7-10 days. You can cover with a towel if you like, but I don't bother.
8. After 7 days, taste a little bit - it should be slightly fermented/fizzy. You can let it ferment longer – to taste – or refrigerate it at this point.
9. The liquid may turn a bit cloudy and "scummy" on top. I just skim the scum. As long as there is no visible mold growth, it should be fine. (And, ahem, I've been known to just remove a thin layer of veg from the top and eat the rest.)
10. If you're not in the habit of eating fermented veggies, start slowly and don't ferment too long - your palate and your digestion will adjust.

variations

1. Cabbage seems to make the best base for fermented vegetables, but the possibilities are truly endless. Try your favorite root vegetables (beets, carrots, turnips, radishes ...), and add some chili peppers, ginger, or dried spices you love. Apples are an interesting addition, too!
2. If you are trying to introduce some sea vegetables into your life but can't stand the taste of seaweed, try adding some dulse flakes (1 tsp for starters, more as you become accustomed to the flavor) to the mixture.

