

Kimchi Style Sauerkraut

Equipment

- Digital scale
- Cutting board and chef's knife
- Large mixing bowl
- Vegetable peeler and grater
- 1-quart (L) wide-mouth canning jar or similar sized jar
- fermentation weight
- Wide-mouth plastic storage cap (or lid and rim that comes with jar)

Ingredients

- 1 medium head fresh green cabbage, 2 ½–3 pounds (1 kg) 2 ½–3 pounds
- 1-2 carrots
- 1 bunch green onions
- 1 large radish (1/2 cup grated) (watermelon radish is nice) or a bunch of small red radishes
- 1 inch knob fresh ginger
- 2-3 cloves garlic
- 1-2 teaspoon [Korean red pepper powder \(gochugaru\) more is spicier](#)
- 1 tablespoon [fish sauce](#) optional, but highly recommended
- 1 tablespoon iodine-free salt (fine-grain) (16 grams)

Instructions

- **SET UP. Gather Supplies and Set Up Scale**
- *Using a digital scale to weigh your ingredients is THE secret for delicious sauerkraut... batch after batch.*
- You don't want to include the weight of your bowl in your measurements, so either zero out the scale (usually done with a TARE button) or write down weight of your bowl

- **CHOP. Prep Your Vegetables and Cabbage**
- *When making sauerkraut, you first prepare the flavoring ingredients – carrots, ginger, radish, caraway seeds, or whatnot – then add sliced cabbage. This allows you to add only as much sliced cabbage as necessary to hit 800 grams (1¾ pounds, 28 ounces) on the scale, the amount that fits perfectly - usually - into a 1-quart (liter) jar.*
- Grate carrots and radish, thinly slice green onions, grate ginger and mince garlic, placing everything, along with the red pepper flakes or Korean red pepper and optional fish sauce, in

your bowl. NOTE: If you're concerned about the "hot" nature of the red pepper on your bare hands, either wear gloves or quickly mix it in right before packing your jar.

- Discard the dirty or limp outer leaves of your cabbage, setting aside one of the cleaner leaves for use during the SUBMERGE step.
- Quarter, then slice cabbage crosswise into thin ribbons. I leave the core in because I find it helps to hold the layers of cabbage together making the slicing job easier.
- Add sliced cabbage to your bowl until the weight of your vegetables and cabbage is 800 grams (1¾ pounds, 28 ounces).

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- **SALT. Create Your Brine**

- *Salt pulls water out of the cabbage and vegetables to create an environment where the good bacteria (mainly lactobacillus) can grow and proliferate and the bad bacteria die off.*
- Sprinkle vegetables and cabbage with 1 tablespoon of salt (16 grams) and mix well.
- Then, massage the vegetables with strong hands until moist, creating the brine.
- You should be able to tilt the bowl to the side and see a good-sized puddle of brine, about 2–3 inches in diameter. This process can take anywhere from 2 to 5 minutes. Notice how the mixture has shrunk. Due to the hot nature of the red pepper, wash hands well after.

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- **PACK. Pack Mixture into Jar**

- Grab handfuls of the salty, juicy cabbage mixture and pack them into your quart-sized (liter) wide-mouth canning jar, periodically pressing the mixture down tightly with your fist or a large spoon so that the brine rises above the top of the mixture and no air pockets remain.
- Be sure to leave at least 1 inch of space between the top of the cabbage and the top of the jar. This should happen automatically because we weighed out just the right amount of cabbage to fit in your jar.
- Pour any brine left in your mixing bowl into the jar and scrape out any loose bits stuck to the sides of the bowl or jar.

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- **SUBMERGE. Hold Ferment Below Brine**

- *Now, make sure your fermenting mixture is in a safe anaerobic (no air) environment. This means keeping the cabbage mixture submerged in the brine while it ferments.*
- Take that cabbage leaf you saved during the SETUP step, tear it down to fit in the jar, and place it on the surface of the packed cabbage. Forgot to save a cabbage leaf? No problem. You can fold a narrow piece of parchment paper to size or even cut an old plastic lid to size.
- Place the 4-ounce jelly jar (or preferred weight) on top of the cabbage leaf, right side up, with its lid removed.
- Lightly (to allow for the escape of CO₂ gases), screw on the white plastic storage lid or airlock of your choice, following their directions.
- I like to label my jars using green or blue painter's tape and a permanent marker. I note the flavor of sauerkraut I made and the date I started fermenting.

- For this recipe, I used the Ferment'n water-sealed fermentation lid. It comes with a weight, the water trough you hold in place with a metal canning band and the lid.

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- **FERMENT. Ferment for 1 to 4 Weeks**

- *Time now for the friendly bacteria to do their work while you watch and wait. Can you wait 7 days to taste the tangy crunch?*
- Place your jar of fermenting sauerkraut in a shallow bowl (to catch the brine that may leak out during the first week of fermentation), out of direct sunlight. Wait for 1 week before opening to sample.
- For what to expect as your sauerkraut ferments, see SALTY Cabbage to SOUR Sauerkraut: Fermentation Signs to Monitor
- Should the brine level fall (very unlikely) and remain below the level of the sauerkraut during this first week,
- **dilute 1 Tbsp of salt in 2 cups of water**
- and pour some of this brine over the sauerkraut (removing the little jar first) until it just covers the mixture. Put the little jar back in, screw the lid on lightly and let the fermentation continue.
- Don't worry if the brine disappears after the 7- to 10-day mark. By this time, you've created a safe environment in which the bacteria that would cause mold or slime has been chased away by the beneficial bacteria produced during the fermentation process.
- You can ferment your sauerkraut for up to 4 weeks. The longer you ferment it, the greater the number and variety of beneficial bacteria that can be produced.

- **STORE. Store in Refrigerator for Up to 1 Year**

- *After fermenting your sauerkraut, it's ready to go into the refrigerator and ready to be eaten.*
- Rinse off the outside of the jar. You can take the little jar out. Clean the rim if necessary (sometimes it can get sticky from the brine that overflows), and screw the lid back on tightly. Add to your label how long you fermented the contents.
- Enjoy a forkful or two of your kimchi sauerkraut with your meals. It will continue to ferment – aging like a fine wine – but much slower than before. If the flavors are too intense, leave the jar in the fridge for a month or two and then eat it. You will be amazed at how the flavors have changed.
- If successfully fermented (tastes and smells good), your sauerkraut can be kept preserved in your refrigerator for up to a year.

Notes

1st **Adjusting the heat:** The spiciness of Gochugaru or red pepper flakes can vary greatly. If you like it hot, use 1 teaspoon; for a milder version, use 1/2 teaspoon. Take notes and adjust for future batches.

2nd **Protect hands:** If your hands are sensitive to the capsicum in the red pepper, use a spoon when mixing and packing. You also might want to consider wearing a pair of thin plastic gloves.

3rd **Fish Sauce:** Optional, but highly recommended. My favorite is Red Boat. You can [read more about fish sauce here](#). The fishy smell dissipates during fermentation. One of my readers successfully substituted soy sauce for the fish sauce.