

Fermented Vegetables: The Basic Culturing Process



Fermented vegetables begin with lacto-fermentation, a method of food preservation that also enhances the nutrient content of the food. The action of the bacteria makes the minerals in cultured foods more readily available to the body. The bacteria also produce vitamins and enzymes that are beneficial for digestion.

Almost any vegetable can be fermented, and fermenting farm-fresh produce is a great way to provide good nutrition year-round. Ferment one vegetable alone or create mix of many different kinds, along with herbs and spices, for a great variety of cultured foods.

Below is what you need to get started:

How to Ferment Vegetables

1. Choose your fermentation equipment.

The right equipment can make all the difference when getting started, from a good chopping knife to the right fermentation vessel to fit your needs. We like the gallon or ½ gallon fermentation jar that automatically burp the mixture. We also have the Perfect Pickler that you can add to one of your own wide mouth jars. Consider carefully when choosing your fermentation equipment and supplies.

2. Prepare the vegetables for fermenting.

There are several ways to prepare the vegetables for fermenting: grating, shredding, chopping, slicing, or leaving whole. The preparation method is a personal choice, though some vegetables are better suited for leaving whole, while others ferment better when shredded or grated.

3. Should you use salt, whey, or starter Culture?

A fermented food recipe may call specifically for salt, salt and whey, or a starter culture. The method chosen can vary, depending on personal taste, special dietary requirements, and even the vegetables used. The information presented in this article can help you decide between salt, whey, and starter cultures for fermenting vegetables.

If salt fermentation is the preferred method, choose from the different kinds of salt appropriate for culturing.

4. Use water to prepare the brine.

Water used for preparing brine or starter culture should be as free from contaminants as possible, for the best-tasting fermented vegetables. Consider the points in this article before [choosing your water source for culturing](#).

5. Weigh the vegetables down under the brine.

Once the vegetables have been prepared and placed in the chosen fermentation vessel, [weigh the vegetables down under the brine](#), keeping them in an anaerobic environment during the fermentation period.

6. Move the fermented vegetables to cold storage.

Once the vegetables are finished culturing, it's time to move them to cold storage. When new to fermenting, it may be difficult to know exactly when to consider the vegetables finished. We have a paper to tell you how to know when the fermenting is complete, to enjoy the finished vegetables for as long as possible.