

(Yankee) Sauerkraut

*This Pennsylvania Dutch staple is a favorite among fermented food fans
...plus its just downright fun to make!*

- 5 pounds cabbage
- approx. 3 tablespoons pickling or kosher salt

Sterilize a large ceramic crock or food-grade plastic bucket (1-3 gallon capacity).

Cut cabbage in half, lengthwise and remove the core. Slice the cabbage very thinly and place in a large mixing bowl. Sprinkle with salt as you go and toss. This will begin drawing water out of the cabbage, creating brine for fermentation.

As the mixing bowl fills, remove the salted cabbage in small quantities to the crock; pack it down tightly and tamp with a sturdy kitchen tool (if you have a vintage cabbage tamper, lucky you!), otherwise use your fist. Continue slicing, salting and packing the cabbage into the crock until the crock is nearly full or you have run out of cabbage.

Through your tamping of the cabbage, enough water should have been released to create a brine to cover the cabbage. If not, keep tamping!! Once the brine has covered the top of the cabbage, place a clean, sterile plate on top. Weight the plate down with a gallon-size zip top bag filled with salted water. This ensures the cabbage will stay submerged in the brine for safe fermentation. Cover all with a clean cotton towel.

Store in a cool basement (68-72 degrees) for about 6 weeks, checking occasionally to be sure cabbage is submerged in the brine. As the cabbage ferments, a scum (or bloom) will appear on the surface. This is normal! The cabbage is protected in the brine. Just remove it regularly so the fermentation process isn't interrupted.

Once fermented, sauerkraut may be kept tightly covered in the refrigerator for a few months. It can also be frozen in sealed freezer bags, or it may be canned. To can, place sauerkraut and liquid in a large pot. Bring slowly to a boil, stirring frequently. Remove from heat and fill sterilized canning jars rather firmly with the sauerkraut and juices, leaving 1/2-inch headspace. Wipe rims of the jars and seal with proper canning lids. Process in a water bath (boiling water that covers the jars by about 1") for 10 minutes for pint jars or 15 minutes for quart jars.

Note: you can add other vegetables to the cabbage prior to fermentation to make unique sauerkraut. Try shredded turnips, beets, carrots, apples, even onions and garlic.