

Better Vegan Raw Russian-Style Sauerkraut

Source: Better Vegan Category: Vegan Fermented Foods
Prep Time: 1 hr 15 min Cook Time: 0 Total Time: 1 hr 15 min
Makes about 2 32oz jars

Ingredients:

1/2+ large head or 1 small head green cabbage (see notes)
1 medium carrot, peeled and shredded into matchstick size pieces
1-2 grape leaves (see notes)
1-2 bay leaves
2-3 black peppercorns
4-6 sprig fresh or dried dill
4 1/2 tsp.+ pink Himalayan salt
1 Tbsp. unpasteurized miso paste
1-inch fresh ginger root, peeled and finely chopped (optional) (see notes)
4 cups filtered water

Instructions:

1. Prepare the ingredients.
2. Sterilize your jars and lids: pour about 1 inch of water in a wide large pot and bring to simmer. Place large splatter screen with a flat and even top on top of the pot. Put your jars and lids upside down on the splatter screen over the simmering water. The steam should be entering the jars and you will notice water condensation inside of the jars. Allow to steam for about 10-15 minutes. Remove the jars and lids from pot and set on top of a clean kitchen towel upside down, so they can drain and dry.
3. Prepare the cabbage: remove about 4-5 outer leaves from the cabbage and set aside. Cut the cabbage head into quarters. Using a mandoline slicer or a sharp knife, shred the cabbage into about 1/4-inch strips. Do not shred the cabbage too thin! This may result in the sauerkraut being too soft and mushy. Place the shredded cabbage in a large bowl, add shredded carrots and toss gently, so the carrots and green cabbage are evenly mixed. Do not squish the cabbage or put any pressure on it, or it may result in a soft kraut. Set aside.
4. Fill the jars: once the jars are cool and somewhat dry (they don't have to be completely dry inside), place them on a kitchen counter with the opening facing up. Sprinkle a pinch of salt on the bottom of each jar. Add grape leaves, dill, bay leaves and peppercorns. Place some of the cabbage mixture to a jar. Using potato masher or a large wooden spoon, gently press the cabbage down, so that it is compact but not squashed. The cabbage should not release any



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juices. Place a dill sprig on top of the cabbage layer. Repeat with the remaining cabbage and dill until the jars are full, leaving about 1-1/2-inch of space from the top.

5. Prepare the brine: in a blender, combine water, salt, miso and ginger (if using) and blend until smooth. The brine may foam and expand slightly, which is normal.

6. Fill the jars with cabbage with the brine. Give it a few minutes to release all the air (you will see air bubble rising to the top). Using potato masher or a large wooden spoon, gently press the cabbage down. It should slightly wilt and shrink in size. You may have to add some more cabbage on top, gently pressing it down. If the cabbage is not completely covered with liquid, add some more brine. Roll the outer cabbage leaves into very tight rolls and place them on top of the mixture to fill that 1-inch space. That will serve as a spacer, so the cabbage mixture is completely submerged and has no contact with air (that is important). When you press the rolls into the jars, some of the brine will spill over, which is OK. Tightly close the jars with the sterilized lids. Place the jars on a baking sheet or a tray with raised edges on your kitchen counter or in the pantry and let ferment for 5 days.

7. Fermentation process: be sure that the room temperature is between 65 and 75 degrees F. If it is slightly colder, wrap a towel around each jar and keep in the pantry. If it is hotter, find a cooler place to keep your jars. During the fermentation process you will notice bubbles rising from the bottom of the jars to the top and the cabbage mixture expanding slightly. You may also hear noises and see the brine spilling out (that is why you need to keep the jars on the tray). These are the signs of the healthy fermentation process and they are perfectly normal. You may also notice smell coming from the spilled-out liquid. You can get rid of the smell by carefully placing the jars on the counter, discarding the liquid and washing the tray, then placing the jars back on it. When moving the jars, it is important to be very careful. Do not shake the jars and avoid any kind of disturbance, because that can interfere with the fermentation process. You may also notice that the cabbage mixture will shrink in size towards the end of the fermentation. This is normal as well. You should expect total shrinkage of about 10-20%.

8. Chilling: at the end of the 5th day, carefully wipe the outside of the jars with a damp cloth and transfer them to the refrigerator. Let chill overnight. Chilling slows down the fermentation process, but it will still be going. Once chilled, open the jar, remove the rolled outer leaves and discard. You may notice that the top layer is slightly dryer and has a different texture, which is normal. You can mix it in with the lower layers to achieve more uniform consistency. Once the seal is broken on each jar, the sauerkraut will keep in the refrigerator for 1 month.

Notes:

You may need more or less cabbage and/or brine depending on how many and how big your jars are. The most important thing is to maintain the proportion of the ingredients, especially when making the brine. If you think you will need more brine, make a double portion, but do not break the ratios.

Since it is hard for most of us to get fresh grape leaves, it is totally fine to use jarred ones. I get a 16oz jar, separate the leaves into bundles in a few Ziploc bags and freeze them. When you need the next batch, just thaw it and keep in the refrigerator until it is used.

If the fermentation temperature is higher than 75 degrees, the sauerkraut may come out softer. You can deal with that by slightly increasing the amount of salt (use 5 tsp. instead of 4 1/2) or shortening the fermentation time.

Traditional European sauerkraut does not have ginger in it, so if you are really after traditional taste, omit the ginger.

Equipment needed:

- Splatter screen
- Large wide pot
- Jars
- Mandoline slicer
- Blender

Serving suggestion:

Can be served on its own, with green salad or on sandwiches, wraps, etc.