

Fancy Sauerkraut - Makes about 2 quarts

- 5 lb. shredded cabbage
- 5 teaspoons pickling salt
- 2-1/2 teaspoons whole caraway seed
- 15 whole dried juniper berries
- 2/3 cup chopped onions
- One sour apple - chopped
- Grated or carrots sliced about 1/8" in thickness on top of every portion of shredded cabbage as it is punched down

Plain Old- Fashioned Sauerkraut - Makes about 1-1/2 quarts

- 5 pounds shredded cabbage
- 3 teaspoons pickling salt



Preparation:

1. Prepare the cabbage by removing any loose leaves as well as the first layer of tight leaves and discard. Remove two more leaves taking care not to damage them and set aside to be used as a cover for the shredded cabbage. Cut thin sliver from core end. Cut the cabbage in half – splitting the core lengthwise. Remove the core and coarsely grate, saving it to be mixed into the grated cabbage. This will provide a rich source of sugars needed for good fermentation. The cabbage is then allowed to drain very well, and then shredded using a cabbage shedder or chef's knife.
2. Proportion the shredded cabbage into equal portions. (5 lb. of cabbage into 1 lb. portions would equal 5 portions). Proportion the ingredients (per the recipe you are following) into the same number of equal portions (5 in our example). Place the first portion of cabbage into a mixing bowl and add a portion of the ingredients, turning cabbage over and over until the ingredients are evenly distributed on the cabbage. Then transfer the cabbage to a crock. If you don't have a crock, you can use a plastic brining bucket, a stainless steel container or a plastic lug. Do not use aluminum containers since the salt will react with the aluminum giving your finished product an off taste. A 1-gallon size container will easily hold 6 lb. of cabbage.
3. After a portion of seasoned and shredded cabbage is placed into the container it needs to be bruised. You must bruise the cabbage so the liquid can be released and come to the top. You can use your fist, a meat mallet, or anything else that will do the job, to punch down the shredded cabbage. Repeat the entire process for every portion of cabbage until you are done. By the time you get to the last portion, you will have liquid coming to the top.
4. At this point the cabbage has to be covered and weighted down. Cover the cabbage with a clean, thin, white cloth (such as muslin) tucking the edges down against the inside of the container. Now cover using a plate, a round paraffin/waxed or poly cutting board or something similar that just fits inside the container, almost anything so that the cabbage is not exposed to the air. Weigh the cover down by putting a clean rock or some other weight into a heavy-duty zip lock bag and then placing it on the cover. The cabbage and the cover have

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FERMENTING SAUERKRAUT AT HOME

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to be held under the liquid. Leave a couple inches of headroom above the liquid for expansion that will occur during fermentation.

5. During fermentation the sauerkraut will emit gas. This will create extra liquid and foam will develop if exposed to air. Using the newer water sealed crocks or the water bag sealing method (described below) will eliminate this. If not, you will have to inspect often removing the foam by skimming or a mold will develop and ruin the sauerkraut. If you take off too much water or it evaporates too quickly, you may have to add extra brine to keep the weights and sauerkraut covered. Add 1-1/2 T spoon pickling salt to 1 quart of water to make this additional brine. It is best to use bottled or boiled water - that has cooled, to prevent tainting the brew.
 - a. An alternative method of sealing and weighing down the cabbage is to place a large zip lock bag partially filled with water on top of the cabbage. The correct size water-filled bag will seal the surface from exposure to air and prevents the growth of film yeast or molds. It also serves as a weight. For extra protection the bag with the water in it can be placed inside another plastic bag. Pick a heavyweight, watertight plastic bag that is intended for use with foods. The size of the bag and the amount of water in the bag can be adjusted to give enough pressure to keep the fermenting cabbage sealed from air exposure and covered with brine.
 - b. Using the newer water-sealed crocks now available eliminates the need to skim off the undesired foam that accumulates on the top of the cabbage. These water-sealed crocks have a domed lid that sits atop the crock, in a water filled gutter, sealing out air while allowing gases to escape. Some crocks come with a set of weights and some have a weight set that can purchased separately.
6. Cover the top of container, with cheesecloth or something similar, to keep out dust or insects.
7. Place container in a 68-72 degree place for a few days until the formation of gas bubbles indicates fermentation is taking place. At that time place the container in 59-degree temperature for a slow fermentation of up to 6 weeks. After a given period of time you can taste the sauerkraut to see how far it has fermented. You may stop fermentation at whatever stage of sourness you desire. Full fermentation is usually completed in 5 to 6 weeks.
8. When sauerkraut reaches the desired fermentation (sourness) you want, it should then be quickly refrigerated to prevent further fermentation. Fully fermented sauerkraut may be kept tightly covered in the refrigerator for a few months; it can be frozen in sealed freezer bags, packed in jars or other containers and refrigerated or it may be canned.

Canning instructions

Hot Pack: Heat sauerkraut and liquid slowly. Do not boil. Remove from heat and fill hot jars rather firmly with sauerkraut and juices, leaving 1/2-inch headspace. You may have to add extra brine to keep the sauerkraut covered. Add 1-1/2 T spoon pickling salt to 1 quart of water to make this additional brine. It is best to use bottled or boiled water - that has cooled, to prevent tainting the brew. Divide this brine mixture between all jars; do not use all the new brine to fill one jar. Process pint jars for 10 minutes & quart jars for 15 minutes.

Raw Pack: Pack jars with sauerkraut and cover with juices, leaving 1/2-inch headspace. Adjust jar lids and process. Process pint jars for 20 minutes & quart jars for 25 minutes

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