

How to Make Sauerkraut

- 1 head green cabbage*
- 1 tablespoon sea salt per head of cabbage
- Clean glass jar
- If you need extra brine: 1 additional tablespoon of sea salt and 4 cups **non-chlorinated** water
- Lid with airlock – *not required*

**This recipe is for one head of cabbage, BUT, keep in mind it takes nearly the same amount of effort to make a lot of kraut as it does a little... So don't be afraid to make a BIG batch. And it tastes better the longer it ages.*

1. Wash the cabbage and remove any wilted outer leaves.
2. Quarter the cabbage, remove the core, and slice the cabbage into thin strips (I shoot for around 1/4" wide). Try to make the strips as uniform as possible, but don't feel like they have to be perfect.
3. Place the strips in a large bowl, and sprinkle the sea salt over the top.
4. Allow it to sit for 15 minutes or so, and then start mashing. There isn't a right or wrong way to do this— just use your hands, a mallet, or whatever blunt object you can find to mash/knead/twist/press/crush the cabbage. The goal is to start the juices flowing.
5. Once the cabbage starts to release the juice, mash/knead for about 8-10 minutes. Hopefully by the end of this process, you'll have a pool of salty cabbage juice sitting in the bottom of your bowl.
6. Place a couple handfuls of cabbage into the jar, then thoroughly pack down with a wooden spoon. The goal is to eliminate as many air bubbles as possible. Repeat the packing and mashing until the jar is full— just make sure to leave about 2" at the top.
7. If there is enough liquid flowing from your cabbage to cover it completely, congrats! If not, make a 2% brine solution to fill up the rest of the jar. *(If you don't completely submerge the cabbage in liquid, it's susceptible to mold and other gunk).*

***To Make a 2% Brine:** Dissolve 1 tablespoon fine sea salt in 4 cups non-chlorinated water. If you don't use all of the brine for this recipe, it will keep indefinitely in the fridge. The finer the salt, the less stirring you must do to dissolve.

8. Cover the exposed cabbage with brine, **leaving 1" of headspace at the top**. If you are having troubles with the cabbage floating to the top, you can weigh it down with a glass weight, OR even wedge a piece of the cabbage core on top to hold it down. **Any cabbage that is exposed will need to be thrown away**, but you were going to toss the core anyway, so it's no big loss.

9. Affix a lid to the jar (fingertight only), and set aside in a room-temperature location, out of direct sunlight, for at least one week. If you do not use an airlock, open the top every few days to "burp" the jar and release any built-up gasses. You'll probably want to place a small dish or tray under the jar to prevent spills.

10. Taste and smell your kraut after one week. If it's tangy enough, move to the refrigerator for storage. If you like a bit more tang, simply allow to ferment for a bit longer.

You may need to adjust the salt levels to your taste. Here are a few tips:

- If in doubt, start with slightly less salt than called for— you can always add more.
- A good way to start training your taste buds to the proper salt levels is to make the brine listed above and taste it. That is what the proper salt levels should be of your cabbage strips when you initially start mashing them.
- Taste-testing is also important as not all salts contain the same level of saltiness.
- After mashing the cabbage and salt for 15+ minutes, taste the brine in the bottom of the bowl. It should taste like ocean water (very salty). If not, add a bit more.
- Getting the proper salt levels is crucial, as too little salt will result in spoiled cabbage, while too much will stunt the fermentation process. You'll get better the more you practice.

Additional notes:

- Air locks are not a requirement for making homemade fermented vegetables but they can reduce the amount of mold on a ferment, and allow the gasses to escape without you having to “burp” the jar.
- There are lots of ways to flavor your kraut, such as caraway seeds, juniper berries, dill seeds, or celery seeds.
- If there is exposed kraut at the top of the jar, it will turn brown, or a scum can develop. Just scrape it off and you’ll be good to go. Even a little mold is OK, as long as it hasn’t contaminated the entire batch. Remember, lacto-fermented foods have a host of friendly bacteria keeping them safe. However, if at any point your sauerkraut smells rancid or nasty, toss it.
- Avoid iodized salt, and stick to high quality sea salt instead.