

How To Make Kimchi

Eating to establish and maintain healthy bacteria in the gut may be the most important action we take to maintain and enhance our health. Once we understand how the good bacteria in our gut aids us—in digestion of our food, protecting us from pathogens, how it's essential to our immune system, how it creates 95% of our serotonin, and more—it's easy to understand how crucial gut health is to our overall health.

Prebiotic foods are the first and most important step. Raw vegetables and fruits feed the healthy bacteria in our gut and provide the insoluble fiber that not only moves waste through our system, it provides a structure for the bacteria to cling to as it multiplies. These foods should comprise 80% of our diet.

Though stomach acid may kill the majority of bacteria in fermented foods, many believe that regular consumption of these foods adds to the healthy bacteria in the gut.

Not long ago, I drove across town to buy kimchi, one of my favorite probiotic foods. A pint was \$6.99. A quart was \$12.99. I was so excited to a gallon jar for \$20.00 I forgot to read the label! MSG. Need I say more? So I decided it was time to learn how to make kimchi.

The first step in making any fermented food is to thoroughly wash the jar you are using for the fermentation, all of the utensils and dishes, and your hands. Just make sure everything is good and clean. Running things through the dishwasher or sterilizing is an option to consider.

You Will Need:

- 1 large Chinese cabbage – 2 lbs (Napa seems to be the most common choice for kimchi, but you can use bok choy or any other cabbage)

- 1 cup kosher salt
- 2 cups of pure water
- 1 daikon radish
- 5 green onions or scallions
- 1 Granny Smith apple
- 2-3 carrots
- 1 head of garlic
- 1/4 cup of sliced ginger
- 1 tablespoon organic sugar
- 1 ½ cups of Korean red chili flakes or hot pepper powder
- soy sauce, fish sauce, or vegetable culture
- Jars or a fermenting crock

Chop Up Your Cabbage

There are hundreds of recipes for kimchi. One of the variations involves how you cut up the cabbage. You can cut it into bite size pieces or cut a Napa cabbage into four pieces, core the pieces, and separate each leaf that you will eventually spread with your spice mix and roll it up. Or you can leave the entire cabbage intact. In this recipe, we are going to cut the cabbage into bite size pieces.

Soak Your Cabbage

First wash the cabbage. Now you will soak the cabbage in your brine mixture.

Again, the directions vary widely on this step. Some say massage the salt into the cabbage leaves others say soak in salt water from 2 hours to overnight. My preference is the quick method that only takes an hour.

- Separate the cabbage into 2 bowls (unless you have one great big bowl).
- Sprinkle half a cup of salt on the cabbage in each bowl.
- Pour one cup of water into each bowl.

- Using very clean hands, massage the salt into the cabbage. Do this every twenty minutes for an hour.

Cut Your Other Vegetables

The other vegetables (and the apple) need to be cut into small pieces – thin enough to ferment well and become soft, but not so thin that they dissolve into the mixture. You can cut your radish, carrots, and onions into matchsticks or slices. Aim for bite size pieces that are no more than $\frac{1}{4}$ inch thick and 1 inch long. Set aside. (Remember to toss the cabbage after 20 minutes).

Make Your Paste

Use a food processor to process the ginger and garlic until it is a paste. Put it in a bowl and add the red chili flakes and organic sugar. Add a few tablespoons of non-chlorinated water to make the paste a spreadable consistency. Add two teaspoons of soy sauce or fish sauce or use a vegetable culture according to directions. Mix well. (Once again, massage and toss your cabbage.)

Rinse and Drain Your Cabbage

When you have massaged and mixed your cabbage three times, rinse it well to remove the excess salt. Make your final rinse in filtered or non-chlorinated water. (Chlorine inhibits the fermentation process). Rinse and dry your bowl. Drain cabbage in a colander for 20-30. Squeeze out excess water (or use a lettuce spinner).

Putting It All Together

Once your cabbage has drained, put it back in the dry bowl and add the other vegetables and apple. Mix well.

Rubber or plastic gloves are a good idea. If you don't use them, the red pepper will burn sensitive skin. But you don't have to use them. Just make sure your hands are really clean and don't touch your face or eyes.

Add the paste and really work it in to coat every surface.

Pack the coated produce into jars or a crock. Pack it tight. Leave an inch or two at the top of the jar. Push down on the cabbage mixture to make the brine rise above it.

Put a lid on the jar and store in a dark place for 1-5 days. You will need to burp the lid once a day if you use a standard jar. Or you can use a lid with an airlock. Or you can use a crock. Your kimchi will be ready when the cabbage looks a little translucent and tastes right. Usually 2-3 days. Refrigerate it at that time to slow down the fermentation process.

Remember, kimchi recipes will vary in ratios and ingredients. The amount of ginger and garlic vary widely and whether or not to use fish sauce or to add carrots or apple. Ratios will vary as well as ingredients. Experiment. Discover your own perfect recipe.

Fermented foods are just one of the ways to improve gut health. An 80% raw food diet is essential to gut health as is ridding the body of Candida.

Editor's Note

Contrary to popular belief, fermented foods are not a great source of probiotics. The bacteria, while numerous, mostly dies in the stomach acid. There are tons of other benefits to fermented foods, and some of the bacteria do reach the gut, but for people suffering from Candida, fermented foods are not your best defense. The supplements below and garlic are better for balancing gut flora. A "trick" that some do is to use

certain foods like black strap molasses or baking soda to lower the acidity of the stomach acid and then eat sauerkraut.

Also, most of the probiotics you find in stores have weak bacteria that don't make it past the stomach acid. FloraMend and Bio-K have exceptionally strong bacteria strands that pass through stomach acid fully functional. Also, vegetables make great prebiotics. They ferment in the gut (in a way) as they are digested.

Recommended Supplements:

- Floramind-Prime by Thorne
- Shillington's Intestinal Cleanse
- Formula SF722
- MicroDefense – Pure Encapsulations

Further Reading:

- *The Fascinating Bacteria in our Gut, and How it Affects Our Whole Lives*
- *Fermented Foods Optimize Your Health*
- *After taking antibiotics, this is what you need to do to restore healthy intestinal flora*

Sources:

- *How to Make Kimchi: according to my Kun Umma – Samuel Kiehoon Lee – YouTube.com*
- *How to make Kimchi – YouTube.com*
- *How To Make Easy Kimchi at Home – Cooking Lessons From the Kitchen*