

Sauerkraut

Arrange for a pickup of fresh, just-from-the-field cabbage. Select varieties that have very tight heads, and don't be shy around very large cabbage – big is good. Get equal or slightly less amount of fresh carrots. The best time for it is late fall, around first frost.

Get non-iodized salt and caraway or dill seed.

Remove outer leaves from the cabbage, wash and core. Wash carrots. Start slicing cabbage, by hand or using a machine. Grate carrots. In your crock or un-damaged enameled pot start layering cabbage and carrots, in about 4" thick layers. Mix by hand, then sprinkle salt and continue mixing and squeezing the mix until it begins to juice. Then pack tightly, add more cabbage and carrots and repeat the whole process until done. It is important to compact the mix so that there is no air present. Once you fill your container, put a clean plate over the mix, and add something heavy to keep the sauerkraut covered with juices at all times – you can use a glass bottle with water, or a large clean rock. Within a few days the fermenting process will begin. Small bubbles of gas will start escaping through the juice, and some unpleasant smells may be present. It is very important to take off the weight at least twice per day, and using a wooden ladle (its handle) or a similar tool, puncture the cabbage in many places to facilitate gas removal from fermentation process. When done, compact the sauerkraut and put back the weight. Fermentation process may take 4-12 days, depending on the temperature. My sauerkraut is typically done in 7 days. It tastes pleasant, is crunchy (not soft), is not too sour, and has no fizzy flavors.

Now you need to move it into glass jars or other appropriate containers (avoid plastic). Pack sauerkraut tightly and store in the refrigerator, ideally keeping it covered by its own juices. Enjoy this great food – it is full of vitamins, and is healthy and delicious. I serve it with sunflower oil.

Quantities: I use about equal amounts of cabbage and carrots; and one pound of non-iodized salt for every twenty pounds of mix. Caraway seed and dill seed are used liberally.