

Curtido (Salvadorian Sauerkraut)

1 head of cabbage, cored and thinly sliced
1 carrot, grated
1 jalapeno pepper, seeded, cored, and thinly sliced
1/2 onion, sliced
1/2 tablespoon dried red pepper flakes
1/2 tablespoon dried Mexican oregano
Salt: use 12 – 20g salt per kilogram of vegetables (Pink Himalayan salt or Celtic Sea Salt)



1. Slice the cabbage into 1/8 inch ribbons using a food processor, mandolin, cabbage slicer or knife.
2. Slice the onion. Grate the carrots. Seed, core, and chop the Jalapenos.
3. Put all the vegetables, along with the oregano and pepper flakes in to a large bowl and mix well.
4. Add salt according to weight of vegetables (see above). Mix salt in evenly and let vegetables stand for 30 mins - this will help draw liquid out of the cabbage which will mean less pounding is required.
5. Massage, pound and squeeze the salted veggies for about 10 minutes to release all the water.
6. Transfer the contents of the bowl to your jar/crock, making sure to push the veggies down so that there are no air pockets and the vegetable is covered with the vegetable brine. We prefer not to add any additional salt brine. However, if your cabbage is not fresh or if you have cut your cabbage more chunky you may find it necessary to add a little 2% brine (5g salt per cup of water).
7. If using a jar with airlock ensure you do not fill your jar to the top i.e. leave at least 5 cms headspace as your kraut will expand/heave during the first week and you will lose brine if your jar is too full.
8. Insert a weight or combination of a Viscodisc/Fermenting Hold 'em Down & glass weight to assist with holding your vegetable under the brine.
9. Seal the jar and store undisturbed in a dark place; 5 days if you are only worried about taste, 2 weeks if you want more probiotic benefit, and 1-2 months if you want the ultimate probiotic benefit (and best taste!). Place a plate/bowl under your jar in case the brine overflows.
10. We recommend using a jar with an airlock to ensure the perfect environment for lactic acid bacteria to flourish. Do not open the jar until the ferment is ready to go into the fridge...defeats the object of using an airlock (pathogenic bacteria need oxygen). Fido Boss Pickler or Kraut Kap with wide mouth jars are recommended. Not all airlocks provide a totally anaerobic environment.
11. If you are not using an airlocked jar you will need to "burp" your ferment especially during the first week when it is more active. Push the vegetable down when opening to burp to ensure your vegetable is under the brine and not exposed to oxygen. If you feel there is insufficient brine you could add a little 2% brine solution after 5-7 days. Should you not wish to invest in airlocks we can recommend our Budget Fermenting Kits. The viscodiscs do a great job of holding the vegetable under the brine and the plastic storage lids are not airtight so they "burp" themselves (and do not rust). If using the budget kits fill your jar to 1 cm from the rim so there is less oxygen.

Notes:

Decide what jar you are going to use before you start. You will need approx 800g veg per litre. This is important to avoid waste and to ensure your jar is filled adequately – too much air/oxygen is not desirable.

Salt ratio is important. Too much and you inhibit the growth of the good bacteria and the ferment won't get started. Too little and you risk bad bacteria/spoilage/mushy vegetables. Therefore weigh your veggies either before or after they are sliced.

To ensure a low histamine kraut it is necessary to ferment in an anaerobic environment for 12 weeks (as per the author of the Gut Health Protocol).

