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## Fermented Sichuan-style pickles

This recipe makes quite a large amount so you may wish to cut down quantities. This is a simplified version of a traditional recipe I found online. Love the flavours of the star anise and Sichuan peppercorns in this ferment.

### Ingredients:

- 1 whole head firm, sweet, round cabbage, plus any or all of the following:
- 1 Chinese or Korean radish, peeled and thinly sliced
- 2 or 3 carrots, peeled and cut thinly on the diagonal
- 1 bunch long beans, as tender and thin as possible, trimmed and kept whole
- 1 or 2 kohlrabi, peeled and thinly sliced
  
- 2 tablespoons Sichuan peppercorns
- 12 star anise
- 12 bay leaves
- 4 tablespoons white liquor (such as *gaoliang*, *maotai*, or 60 proof rice liquor, etc (I have not been able to ascertain why this is required and it is fine to leave it out)
- Rock sugar to taste (I omitted this)
- 12 slices fresh ginger
- 12 garlic cloves, peeled and cut in half
- 4 fresh red jalapeno chilies or other fresh chillies to taste, cleaned and halved

Clean the vegetables, pat them dry. Cut off and reserve 2 large leaves from the outside of the cabbage. Cut the cabbage in half, core, and tear it into pieces approx 2" inches square. Prepare the other vegetables and mix in the spices/other ingredients. Place in crock or fermenting jar pressing down as you go. Cover vegetables with 1.5 - 2% brine i.e. 15 - 20g pink Himalayan salt/sea salt per litre filtered water.

Set the cabbage leaves on top of the vegetables making sure that they will not stick up above the brine. Carefully place a clean weight on top of the vegetables. Place crock in a cool place to ferment for 2 weeks to a month. Length of time depends of temperature, size of vegetables, taste preference. What to look for: the pickles should taste sour, rather than simply salty, and they should still be crisp and colorful.

Serve as is or you can drizzle something like toasted sesame or Citrus Chili Oil or whatever else suits your fancy. The flavors in the pickle are sharp, which is why a flavored oil goes so well here. These pickles are also incredibly good in a Sichuan stir-fry with little more than strips of beef as a contrast.

If you wish to follow the traditional recipe you can find it at <http://carolynphillips.blogspot.com.au/2012/11/really-and-truly-amazing-traditional.html> The original recipe is far more complicated and you are welcome to try it and report back if you wish