

TRANSFORMATION THROUGH PRESERVATION

A GLIMPSE INTO JEWISH FOOD



The history of our diet is filled with literal and figurative acts of preservation, through revolutions in fermentation, cheese-making, long-term grain storage, curing and pickling. And Jewish practice was preserved by the laws of *Kashrut* (Jewish dietary laws).



Take a look at **Jewish-style pickling**. Through fermentation, the liquid from the original cucumber dissipates and a new texture and flavor emerge.



This transformation from cucumber to pickle in some ways celebrates the essence of what the cucumber always was, by enhancing its most distinguished properties.

PICKLING & FERMENTATION 101

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Lacto-Fermentation vs. Vinegar Pickling

Lacto-fermentation, also known as saltwater pickling, is a traditional preservation method that utilizes the natural bacteria found on vegetables and fruits in order to preserve them. **Vinegar pickling**, also known as quick pickling, by contrast, utilizes vinegar to destroy all bacteria found on vegetables and fruits, thereby preserving them in the process.

With lacto-fermentation, we create an ecosystem for *Lactobacillus* (the same bacteria found in yogurt) to thrive and convert carbohydrates (sugars) into lactic acid. The acid acts as a natural preservative. The end result is not only delicious, but healthy—it aids in digestion and boosts the immune system.

4 Essentials of Lacto-Fermentation

Salt: The salt brine regulates fermentation by enabling positive bacterial growth and inhibiting negative bacterial growth. Use kosher salt or sea salt, nothing with added iodine!

Spice: Add your desired pickling spices to saltwater to infuse flavor into brine. Tannin-rich leaves—such as bay leaves—help keep the crunch. Garlic, dill, mustard seeds, coriander, peppercorns, chili peppers and cinnamon sticks are standards.

Produce: Choose the freshest, thinnest cucumbers possible. Kirby is your best choice variety, but you can replace cucumbers with green beans for similar flavor results and a consistent crunch.

Patience: The true process of fermentation involves waiting as the bacteria goes to work. Be sure to keep your jar in a moderate temperature space (65–75°F). Keep your vegetables under the salty brine, too. Anything above the liquid may get a tad bit moldy. Note that mold happens often, and it's ok! Anything white can simply be scraped away/cut off of the veggies. The rest will be just fine. Once your pickles are at their desired flavor point, place them in the refrigerator to stop the fermentation process and keep them there and enjoy.



Recipe for Crisp Garlic Dilly Beans or Cucumbers



1. Fill a pint sized jar with water (2 cups). Add 1 heaping tbsp kosher salt and shake or stir to dissolve the salt fully.
2. Place cucumbers or green beans in the jar (as many as will fit, squeeze them in tightly!), along with 1–2 bay leaves, 1–3 cloves chopped garlic, 2 sprigs of dill, and ½ tsp seeds such as mustard seeds, peppercorns, coriander seeds, etc. If needed, add more water/salt mixture (same ratio) and cover the veggies, leaving at least an inch between the liquid and the top of the jar.
3. Seal the jar. After the first two days, “burp” the jar. Check them daily after that. When you like the flavor, transfer the jar to the fridge. Enjoy!

Basic Formula for Sauerkraut

1. Core a 3-pound head of cabbage, removing any crusty outer leaves (remaining cabbage will weigh about 2 ½ pounds). Shred cabbage into thin slices and massage shreds with 1 ½ tbsp kosher salt, adding a little at a time. The cabbage will begin to sweat. Let it rest and continue to massage until a handful of cabbage drips. Mix in any spices (about 1 ½ tsp spices).
2. Pack the cabbage into a glass jar or ceramic crock, pressing it down until the liquid rises and cabbage is submerged. If necessary, use a weight or small jar to keep cabbage pressed down.
3. Seal the jar. Leave on counter at room temp. After the first two days, “burp” the jar. Cabbage takes about 1–2 weeks to ferment. It's ready when you like it. Keep in fridge to store.

