



Contains live cultures • Natural ingredients
Vegan / Vegetarian

Wild Fermented Vegetables

Wild fermented vegetables are the transformation of raw vegetables into fermented vegetables by microorganisms naturally present on the vegetable and in our environment.

They contain live cultures which are good for your digestive system. Other benefits of wild fermented vegetables are their increased vitamin and mineral content. They are also easier to digest meaning that energy spent on digesting foods can be used for other activities such as healing the body.

Vegetables

You can ferment anything that contains sugars (carbohydrates), nuts, pulses and even avocados. I love fermenting carrots which keeps their crunch beautifully. Some vegetables are more suitable to ferment e.g. cauliflower in comparison to spinach, but I encourage you to have a go at experimenting.

Brine Fermentation

There are different methods of fermenting vegetables and I use the brine method to ferment as it suits me being less time consuming. A brine is what you get when you mix water and salt, and this is what you then pour over the vegetables. The important thing to remember when you ferment using any method is to keep the vegetables submerged under water at all times.

Salt

I use Himalayan Pink Salt as this contains added minerals but you can use any salt as long as it's not table salt which contains anti-caking agents as well as iodine. Other salts to consider are Celtic, Kosher or Sea salt.

Water

I recommend using distilled or at the very least filtered water. There is so much nonsense in tap water it is something that should be avoided all together.

Herbs and Spices

This is where you can get really creative and include all sorts of combinations. Garlic and chili are favourites but I've used cumin, coriander seeds and curry mix, one time in the same ferment. I use dry herbs in the main but again there is nothing preventing you from using fresh. Dill and basil are lovely fresh.

It's worth remembering that spices and herbs increases in flavour during the ferment so be moderate in their use, unless you want something very flavourful.

Fermentation Time

I ferment in room temperature. The fermentation is quicker in the summer months or in a warm environment, and slows down in the colder months. As a rule of thumb I recommend a minimum of two weeks but you can ferment for longer. It is worth noting however that the longer you ferment the softer the vegetables gets.

The vegetables will not stop fermenting but slows down significantly when you put them in the fridge. Since I eat a lot the jar is often finished before they go soft. If you are a moderate consumer, I recommend you put them in the fridge when you feel the ferment is done to keep them crunchy.

I have a bright kitchen with a lot of sunshine and have not had any problems fermenting. Some people prefer placing their ferments in a cupboard. I encourage you to experiment and see what works best for you.



Equipment

I started fermenting in washed out jam jars and there are a lot of different fermentation crocks and jars on the market. I have used both ceramic water lock crocks and standard mason/ kilner glass jars with clasp locks. I like using glass as I can see what's happening with the ferments and I enjoy seeing how they transform. I use a brand called Bormioli Rocco as these offer large size jars but you can use any used glass jars. Avoid fermenting in plastic.

I use fermentation glass weights but you can also use a cabbage leaf as a topper to keep the vegetables submerged under water. This is also a much cheaper option. In my experience the smaller you cut the vegetable the more floaters you will have.

You need scales to weigh the ingredients

A knife and chopping board

Vegetable brush and or peeler

A calculator

Signs and what to look out for

Small bubbles forming around the vegetables, is one of the more common signs that your vegetables are fermenting. This happens after a couple of days as gases are released by the lactic acid bacteria in the ferment. Sometimes this does not occur but don't worry. If that is the case, I recommend checking the vegetables are and remains submerged under the brine. Check again after a couple of days and if you still can't see any bubbles stir the ferment and smell it. You should be able to determine if its off.

The other sign to look out for is how the ferment smells. When opening the fermentation jar after a few days it should release a sour, vinegary aroma. While the aroma may be strong at first, it should be pleasant. Likewise, when tasting the vegetable, it should taste tangy. Trust your senses when determining, if it smells and tastes off discard it and start again.

The brine can also turn cloudy and sometimes the ferment produces something called Kham yeast, a snowy looking film covering the vegetables. Although unsightly it is safe to eat.

Obvious signs of spoilage are moulds and slime.

Be mindful of how much you pack in the jar. I've often made the mistake of



packing the jar to the brim and have had liquid pouring out. This is not so much a problem when you use a fermentation crock but does erode the metal on a recycled jam jar lid or clasp lock.

A simple formula to get you started:

500g Vegetables

500ml Water

25g Salt

The weight of your vegetables	+	The water needed to cover the vegetables	=	The combined weight of vegetables and water
500g		500ml		1000g

The combined weight of vegetables and water	×	0.025	=	The salt needed to make the brine
1000g				25g

1. Prepare your vegetables and add them to the jar/ crock. Also add any herbs or spices you want to use.
2. Pour the water over the vegetables, herbs and spices making sure that it covers.
3. Measure out the salt using the formula above and pour that in.
4. Place a glass weight or cabbage leaf on top to prevent floaters and to keep the vegetables submerged. Close the lid.
5. Place your creation in a spot where you can enjoy seeing your vegetables turn into delicious ferments.

The brine needs to always cover the vegetables but the amount of water will be different depending on the weight of the vegetables you want to ferment. The key is

to multiply the combined weight of vegetables and water with 0.025, as this will give you the optimal amount of salt to use.

Simple Meal Ideas

I tend not to cook with any fermented foods as heat destroys the bacteria and reduces the nutritional value. I eat my ferments as a side dish when I have something warm and as part of the dish when it's cold e.g. in a salad.

I love having my ferments with cheese and a great paring is cheddar cheese, fermented carrots and walnuts. They are also delicious as a side dish to a cheese omelette and in halloumi wraps, and I also eat them as a snack when feeling peckish.

Again I encourage you to let your imagine run free and try them out with your favourite foods, as part of the main or as a delicious side dish.

In health and happiness always,

