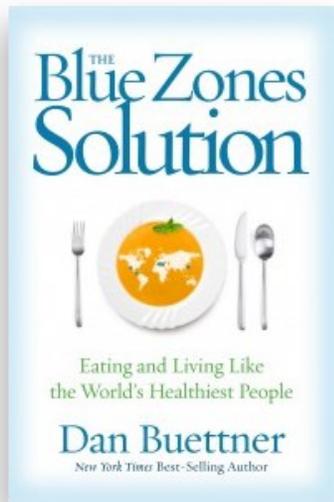


Join us for our next **Conscious Eating Book Group** meeting on Wednesday October 11, 2017 at 6:30 p.m. We're reading "**The Blue Zones Solution**" by Dan Buettner.

The Blue Zones are the five places in the world with the longest-lived, healthiest people. Read the book to learn *how* they do it. Find out more about the book and Blue Zones projects at <https://bluezones.com/>.



"What's For Dinner?" is a series of seasonal healthy cooking workshops and book group meetings presented quarterly to reflect the local agricultural bounty of the four seasons, and raise awareness of local, national, and global food issues. The next cooking workshop is scheduled for January 13, 2018. Visit solanolibrary.com. We will have more information on our events calendar soon.

Recipes from "Preserving the Fall Harvest"

What's For Dinner? Cooking Workshop
September 16, 2017
John F. Kennedy Library, Vallejo



Presented by Chef Lisa Nuñez-Hancock

Brought to you by Sustainable Solano, The Solano County Library, and UR What You Eat.

We would like to thank the Friends of the Vallejo Public Library for sponsoring this event.

5-DAY SAUERKRAUT

With a little practice you can make delicious, healthy and safe sauerkraut at home. This sauerkraut will be rich in natural probiotics. The most important thing about the process is to make sure that the brine covers the sauerkraut completely preventing any exposure to air. Lactobacilli are the beneficial bacteria we want to cultivate. That culture gives sauerkraut its tang and keeps the sauerkraut crunchy and makes it probiotic.

What is important about the cultivation of lactobacilli is that it makes the sauerkraut acidic so that the bad bacteria cannot survive in that environment. Store your fermenting sauerkraut in a cool location while it ferments. If the exterior temperature is too warm pectin-digesting enzymes will activate and it will turn vinegary and it will lose its crunch.

Ingredients

1 small to medium head of cabbage (green or red)
2 medium carrots
1 medium onion (white or red)
1 Tablespoon non-iodized salt (sea salt or kosher salt or a natural salt with no additives or chemicals)
A large non-reactive bowl (pottery, glass or plastic)
Sterilized containers (quart canning jars/ see below for instructions)

Instructions

Discard any bruised or damaged cabbage leaves. Cut the cabbage into quarters and remove the core. Slice the cabbage into 1/4 inch strips and do a rough chop. I like this method because I like a rustic and crunchy sauerkraut. You can also grate all of your ingredients for a finer textured sauerkraut.

Chop onion and carrots, or you can also grate the carrots or slice them into strips. Place all ingredients in a large non-reactive bowl. Sprinkle the salt evenly over the vegetables. I like to use restaurant grade plastic gloves for the next step. Start to massage the cabbage, onion, carrot and salt together. The vegetables will begin to release their juices. This

Instructions for Brined Carrots

Wash the carrots and trim the tops leaving 1/2" of stems intact. You may need to trim the ends to fit into jars.

Wash lemon and remove the zest in long strips with a vegetable peeler. Cut lemon in half, juice and reserve both zest and juice. Cut the green onions in half lengthwise. Blanch garlic.

Arrange carrots, lemon zest and juice, garlic and green onions in sterilized jars. The vegetables should stand up vertically. Pack in as many as will fit.

Boil water. In a non-reactive bowl dissolve salt into the water to make the brine. When brine is warm (not hot) pour it over the carrot and vegetable mixture. You will want the carrots to be completely submerged in the brine. Put the jars in a cool place with low light and an ambient temperature of 60 to 68 degrees. Leave the lid loosely sitting on top to release carbon dioxide.

Let the carrots ferment until they taste sour. This might take up to three weeks. Check periodically. If mold appears it is harmless and you can skim it off. When the taste of your carrots are to your liking refrigerate them. If the container is sterilized, non-reactive, and airtight you can keep carrots in the refrigerator for up to 1 year. They will be so delicious though, that they probably won't last that long.

Instructions for Blackberry-Vanilla Fruit Spread

In a medium saucepan over medium heat, combine the blackberries, shredded apple, lemon juice, a pinch of salt and 1 tablespoon of water. As the mixture begins to boil mash the fruit with a potato masher until it breaks down. The fruit will release some liquid, but you may have to periodically add a small amount of water so that the fruit mixture does not burn or stick to the pan. You will want to cook the mixture continually stirring it, so that it does not burn, until much of the liquid has evaporated. Meanwhile, in a small bowl moisten the chia seeds with a teaspoon of water. Stir and let stand until they have plumped up. When the cooked fruit mixture is thick, lower the heat and add the honey and lemon zest. Cook about five more minutes. When the mixture is cool add the plumped chia seeds and vanilla extract. Stir the mixture until well combined. Transfer the fruit spread to a sterilized pint jar. The blackberry fruit spread will keep for approximately two weeks in the refrigerator. It can also be frozen in a Ziploc bag.

Note

Remember, when making fruit spreads without refined sugar, they will not gel the same. Don't expect a hard-set jam. Rather, be excited about an all-natural healthy fruit spread that can do double time as a topping for ice cream or French toast.

Brined Carrots

Ingredients

1 1/2 lbs small carrots with stems (multicolored if possible)
1 lemon
3 tablespoons natural sea salt or kosher salt
1 qt water
2 cloves garlic
2 green onions
Sterilized quart jar(s)

might take some time. You will want to create enough liquid from the vegetable mixture to cover your sauerkraut once it is in the jars.

Pack the sauerkraut into the jars. I use canning jars and make small batches of sauerkraut. This way I can enjoy the sauerkraut at different stages of fermentation. The liquid should completely cover the kraut. This is very important. I prefer to pull the liquid from the cabbage, carrot and onion because it is more flavorful. If you are having trouble creating enough liquid to cover the sauerkraut you can make a brine by adding 1 teaspoon of "natural" salt to one cup of room temperature water. It will dilute the mixture but it is essential that the mixture is covered with liquid so that no air will come in contact with the kraut. Leave a little space at the top of the filled jars or they will bubble over during the fermenting process.

You can place a slice of cabbage or a piece of wax paper on top of the sauerkraut and press down to keep the kraut below it and the liquid level above it. Let the lid sit on top of the jar but do not screw it closed because that the carbon dioxide that is being created in the fermentation process needs to escape. This is very important. The sauerkraut needs to be submerged in liquid and the lid needs to be loosely placed on top of the jar.

Store your sauerkraut jars in a cool low light environment. I put mine in the guest room shower. If the environment is too hot pectin-digesting enzymes will activate and it will turn vinegary.

Five days is the minimum amount of time for fermenting. I like it at this point because it is both tangy and still crunchy. Let it ferment longer and see how you like the taste. Two to three weeks creates a more complex flavor.

Once you refrigerate the kraut you dramatically slow down fermentation.

Sterilizing Containers

Even though this is not a long term canning project I like to get into the habit of sterilizing my jars and lids. It keeps pesky bad bacteria at bay.

With metal tongs I submerge my canning jars and lids into a stockpot of boiling water so they are completely covered. After about five minutes carefully remove jars & lids with the tongs and place them on a clean surface (a cookie sheet or clean kitchen towel) to dry.

As you master the technique you can customize your kraut by adding beets, ginger and caraway seeds (to name a few ingredients) for a more complex flavor profile.

Recommendations

I recommend for further reading- The Art of Fermentation and Wild Fermentation by my guru Sandor Katz, who I studied with years ago. He also has a website, many more books, and an organization -- The Foundation for Fermentation Fervor.

For more information on safe canning practices refer to the website of the National Center for Home Food Preservation.

EASY DILL PICKLES

Ingredients

2 lbs. fresh pickling (Kirby) cucumbers (between 8-12 medium sized)
6 sprigs of fresh dill
4 cloves garlic (blanched, see instructions below)
2 teaspoons multi-colored peppercorns
2 fresh Thai dragon chilies or 2 dried chile arbol
2 teaspoons mustard seeds or a pickling mix
2-4 bay leaves
Natural sea salt or kosher salt (non-iodized)
Water
2- one quart sterilized canning jars

Instructions

Wash cucumbers reserve some whole ones and slice some lengthwise into spears. Arrange cucumbers in jars. Position dill, chilies, bay leaves

and blanched garlic around cucumber spears.

Bring water to a boil and let it cool down. Pour 3 cups of water into a container and add 2 tablespoons of natural salt (non-iodized/ no chemicals added). Stir until salt is dissolved. Add mustard seeds (or pickling mix) and peppercorns. When brine is warm pour it over the cucumbers, making sure all spices get evenly distributed between the jars and that the cucumbers are covered with brine. Place jars in a cool, low light location. Within three days you should see tiny bubbles in the brine. The fermentation process is happening. Make sure that the brine always covers the pickles as they are fermenting. After one week you can taste your pickles. If a little scum forms on top wipe it away with a paper towel. After about two weeks your pickles should be tasty and sour. They will be olive green in color. These pickles will keep for up to two months in your refrigerator.

The thing about garlic...

Garlic often turns a turquoise blue color when it is submerged in pickling brine. It is a chemical reaction and totally harmless. If the color bothers you, try dropping the garlic cloves in boiling water for two minutes, blanching them, and then add to the brine.

BLACKBERRY-VANILLA FRUIT SPREAD

Ingredients

3 cups ripe blackberries
1 Granny Smith apple, cored and shredded (leave 1/2 the peel on)
2 tablespoons honey
2 teaspoons chia seeds moistened
1 tablespoon lemon juice
1/2 teaspoon lemon zest
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
water
pinch of salt
1 sterilized canning jar (1 pint)