



# SAUERKRAUT

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## Suitable Containers, Covers, and Weights for Fermenting Cabbage

A 1-gallon container is needed for each 5 pounds of fresh cabbage. Therefore, a 5-gallon stone crock is of ideal size for fermenting about 25 pounds of fresh cabbage or cucumbers. Food grade plastic and glass containers are excellent substitutes for stone crocks. Other 1- to 3-gallon non-food-grade plastic containers may be used if lined inside with a clean food-grade plastic bag.

Fermenting sauerkraut in quart and half gallon Mason jars is an acceptable practice, but may result in more spoilage losses.

**Caution: Use food-grade plastic containers. Do not use garbage bags or copper, iron, or galvanized metal containers, or lead-glazed crocks.**



Cabbage must be kept 1 to 2 inches under brine while fermenting. After adding prepared cabbage and brine, insert a suitably sized dinner plate or glass pie plate inside the fermentation container. The plate must be slightly smaller than the container opening, yet large enough to cover most of the shredded cabbage.

To keep the plate under the brine, weight it down with sealed quart jar(s) filled with water. Covering the container opening with a clean, heavy kitchen towel helps to prevent contamination from insects and molds while cabbage is fermenting.



Fine quality fermented cabbage is also obtained when the plate is weighted down with a very large clean, plastic bag filled with 3 quarts of water containing 4½ tablespoons of canning or pickling salt. Be sure to seal the plastic bag. Freezer bags sold for packaging turkeys are suitable for use with 5-gallon containers.

The fermentation container, plate, and jars must be washed in hot, sudsy water, rinsed well with very hot water before use.

Source: National Center for Home Food Preservation  
[http://www.uga.edu/nchfp/how/can\\_tomato.html](http://www.uga.edu/nchfp/how/can_tomato.html)

Resources:

[www.buylocalnebraska.org](http://www.buylocalnebraska.org)



## Sauerkraut

25 lbs cabbage  
 ¾ cup canning or pickling salt

**Quality:** For the best sauerkraut, use firm heads of fresh cabbage. Shred cabbage and start kraut between 24 and 48 hours after harvest.

**Yield:** About 9 quarts

**Procedure:** Work with about 5 pounds of cabbage at a time. Discard outer leaves. Rinse heads under cold running water and drain. Cut heads in quarters and remove cores. Shred or slice to a thickness of a quarter. Put cabbage in a suitable fermentation container (see note on "Suitable Containers for Fermenting Cabbage"). Add 3

tablespoons of salt. Mix thoroughly, using clean hands. Pack firmly until salt draws juice from cabbage. Repeat shredding, salting, and packing until all the cabbage is in the container. Be sure it is deep enough so that its rim is at least 4 or 5 inches above the cabbage. If juice does not cover the cabbage, add boiled water and cooled brine (1½ tablespoons of salt per quart of water). Add plate and weights; cover container with a clean bath towel. Store at 70° and 75°, kraut will be fully fermented in about 3 to 4 weeks; at 60° to 65°, fermentation may take 5 to 6 weeks. At temperatures lower than 60°, kraut may not ferment. Above 75°, kraut may become soft.

If you weigh the cabbage down with a brine-filled bag, do not disturb the crock until normal fermentation is completed (when bubbling ceases). If you use jars as weight, you will have to check the kraut 2 to 3 times each week to remove scum if it forms. Fully fermented kraut may be kept tightly covered in the refrigerator for several months or it may be canned using directions in the next column:



**Hot Pack:** Bring kraut and liquid slowly to a boil in a large kettle, stirring frequently. Remove from heat and fill jars rather firmly with kraut and juices, leaving ½-inch headspace.

**Raw Pack:** Fill jars firmly with kraut and cover with juices, leaving ½-inch headspace.

Wipe sealing edge of jars with a clean, damp paper towel. Add lids, tighten screw bands, and process in a boiling water canner.

Adjust lids and process according to the recommendations in Table 1.



**Table 1.** Recommended process time for **Sauerkraut** in a boiling-water canner.

		Process time at Altitudes of			
Style of Pack	Jar Size	0 - 1,000 ft	1,001 - 3,000 ft	3,000 - 6,000 ft	Above 6,000 ft
Hot	Pints	<b>10 minutes</b>	15	15	20
	Quarts	<b>15 minutes</b>	20	20	25
Raw	Pints	<b>20 minutes</b>	25	30	35
	Quarts	<b>25 minutes</b>	30	35	40

After processing is complete, remove jars from canner with a jar lifter and place on a towel or rack. Do not re-tighten screw bands. Air-cool jars for 12 to 24 hours. Remove screw bands and check lid seals. If the center of the lid is indented, wash, dry, label, and store jar in a clean, cool, dark place. If jar is unsealed, examine and replace jar if defective, use new lids, and reprocess as before. Wash screw bands and store separately.

Kraut is best if consumed within a year and is safe as long as lids remain vacuum sealed.

### Recommended Varieties of Cabbage:

Resistant Golden Acre



Danish Ballhead



Late Flat Head



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