

Making Sauerkraut The German Way!

P.S. Found out Kim has some Crocks

~ Available at Sierra Valley Hardware and Home Center.

411 Main Street.

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Timeframe: 3 to 6 weeks

Special Equipment:

- Ceramic crock or food-grade plastic bucket, one-gallon capacity or greater
- Plate that fits inside crock or bucket
- Large Gallon size zip-lock baggies, One Large Black Trash Bag
- Tamper or something to use for tamping

Ingredients (for 1 gallon):

- 2 – 3 shredded cabbages, depending on your crock size
- 3 tablespoons canning salt

Process:

1. Chop Cabbage finely or coarsely, with or without hearts, however you like it. Add a 2 or 3-inch layer of shredded cabbage in the crock, sprinkle with salt, and tamp it down, packing it in the crock.. Repeat until your crock is half full. The tamping packs the kraut tight in the crock and helps force water out of the cabbage
2. Sprinkle salt lightly to taste on the cabbage as you go. The salt pulls water out of the cabbage (through osmosis), and this creates the brine in which the cabbage can ferment and sour without rotting. The salt also has the effect of keeping the cabbage crunchy, by inhibiting organisms and enzymes that soften it. 3 tablespoons of salt is a rough guideline for 5 pounds of cabbage. I never measure the salt; I just sprinkle some on top of each layer as I tamp it down.
3. Cover kraut with a plate or some other lid that fits snugly inside the crock. Place the weights on the plates ... water filled ziplock bags inside the black garbage bag incase the ziplocks leak. The weight is to force water out of the cabbage and then keep the cabbage submerged under the brine. Cover the whole thing with a cloth or lid to keep dust out. You may add ½ cup of water.
4. Some cabbage, particularly if it is old, simply contains less water. If the brine does not rise above the plate level by the next day, add enough salt water to bring the brine level above the plate. Add about

a teaspoon of salt to a cup of water and stir until it's completely dissolved.

5. Leave the crock to ferment. I generally store the crock in my pantry. Where the temperatures are even.. Not too hot, and not cold.
6. Check the kraut in a few weeks he volume reduces as the fermentation proceeds. Sometimes mold appears on the surface. Many books refer to this mold as "scum," but I prefer to think of it as a bloom. Skim what you can off of the surface; it will break up and you will probably not be able to remove all of it. Don't worry about this. It's just a surface phenomenon, a result of contact with the air. The kraut itself is under the anaerobic protection of the brine. Rinse off the plate and the weight. Taste the kraut. Generally it starts to be tangy after a couple weeks and the taste gets stronger as time passes. "In the cool temperatures of a cellar in winter, kraut can keep improving for months and months. In the summer or in a heated room, its life cycle is more rapid. Eventually it becomes soft and the flavor turns less pleasant."
7. When you get the kraut where you like it, you many freeze it or can it.