

Lacto-Fermenting for Your Health

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Ever wonder what our ancestors did before the advent of modern-day freezers and canning techniques? For thousands of years food was preserved and stored through lacto-fermentation. Lacto-fermentation uses the naturally occurring, beneficial *lactobacilli* bacteria that are found on plants. The incredibly beneficial *lactobacilli* bacteria are able to convert starches and sugars found in vegetables and fruit into lactic acid. Lactic acid works like a natural preservative, inhibiting the growth of putrefying bacteria that can spoil food.

When we eat the lacto-fermented foods we reap the benefits of the lactic acid. These lactic-acid producing bacteria are able to survive the highly acidic environment of the stomach, pass through the small intestine and reach the lower bowel still active and ready to work. In our lower bowel good bacteria are present that help us assimilate vitamins and keep our bodies healthy. Beneficial bacteria thrive in an acidic environment that eating lactic acid containing foods encourage. However, harmful bacteria, parasites and yeast can also be found in our lower bowel. Exposure to these pathogens occurs on a daily basis and we need a strong, healthy gut environment and flora to help keep these pathogens under control. Research has shown that the lactic-acid producing bacteria can prevent the growth of coliform bacteria and other pathogens in the bowel.

Regular consumption of



Powerhouse Sauerkraut Salad. (Recipe available at GreenRawGoddess.com/sauerkraut-salad) Says Aleksandra Zarak, blog owner and cook: *Fermented food is healthy for you and we should all be having a little bit of sauerkraut, kimchi or fermented drinks every day. But, despite all the benefits, the prospect of eating sauerkraut every day can seem daunting. Not for me! I come from a country where people love it, have been making it themselves for decades and eating it usually with meat. Since becoming a raw foodie, I dared myself to eat sauerkraut every day for a week, but never repeat the same recipe twice. It can be done, I assure you! And your intestines and digestion will be thankful for it.*



lacto-fermented foods offers these benefits and may more. Additional benefits of lacto-fermentation include enhanced digestibility, increased vitamin levels. Lactobacilli also produce valuable enzymes, antibiotic and anti-carcinogenic substances.

The beneficial nature of lacto-fermented foods is evident by their wide spread use throughout the world. Common fermented foods include yogurt, kombucha, sauerkraut, kefir, kimchi,

pickles, and various relishes and condiments.

Fermenting foods, although at first thought can seem intimidating, is actually quite easy and straightforward. The basics of fermenting include first washing and cutting up the vegetables or fruits you are fermenting, then mixing with spices or herbs, salt and occasionally whey (depending on what you are fermenting). The mixture is then pounded to release the juices, packed in glass jars, allowed to sit at room temperature for a few days to a few weeks and then transferred to cold storage. Well-fermented foods will have a cultured sour smell that although pungent smells appetizing. Fermentations that have not progressed properly will be very obvious as then will smell rotten, putrid and unappetizing. Nothing could convince you to eat the ferment that has gone bad!

If you are new to fermenting, there are great resources available to help you along your journey. The website: CulturesForHealth.com offers expert videos, tips, books, and equipment. *The Complete Idiots Guide to Fermenting Foods* by Haron is a great resource. Sally Fallon's book: *Nourishing Traditions* offers a chapter dedicated to fermentation. The Weston A. Price foundation has a website WestonAPrice.com and a local chapter here in town. Last year the chapter offered a weekend class on food fermentation. Sandor Ellix Katz has two helpful books entitled: *Wild Fermentation* and *The Art of Fermentation* and hosts a blog at WildFermentation.com. ■

EDITOR'S RECOMMENDATION: Dr. Joseph Mercola's **Kinetic Culture**



fermentation starter. After years of research, Mercola.com has released its proprietary formulation, Kinetic Culture, designed to produce professional-quality fermented vegetables at home. This formulation contains 10 strains of Vitamin K2-producing probiotic bacteria, yielding up to 100 billion CFU probiotics per serving to stimulate beneficial gut microflora growth. Also, watch easy tutorials.



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