



TUV HASHAVUA: BEST OF THE WEEK

TUV HA'ARETZ CSA
AT THE
FOREST HILLS
JEWISH CENTER

In a Pickle: Contemplating Fermentation

Judy Trupin, co-Chair and Member of Tuv Ha'Aretz CSA

I'm a pretty adventurous cook. I combine things that sound odd, cook with ingredients I've never heard of, and bake without recipes. But I've always been leery of fermenting and canning. Just too scared about all things bacterial. Lately, though, I've been gearing up to try fermenting vegetables. I love all things sour and for years, I've read about possible health benefits, mainly related to the probiotic content of these foods. Maybe I'm part of a trend. According to USDA microbiologist Fred Breidt, Jr., it's a "movement that's picking up speed."

I haven't conquered my fears yet, but I've been doing a bit of research. Part A of that research is the fun part - trying out some purchased products. Last week, I picked up the locally made Brooklyn's BAO Fermented Food & Drink's delightfully crunchy Raw Slaw – Tangy, a mix of fermented veggies including carrots, cabbage and daikon. I've enjoyed it mixed with avocado, as well mashed into some of Golden Earthworm's potatoes. I also like it straight off the spoon.

A few days ago, I brought home a jar of Rejuvenative Foods' Sauerkraut. I was interested that the label stated it was "salt free." Curious about what fermenting agent was used, I read the label: The only ingredients were cabbage, lemon juice and dill. One website had cautioned me that veggies can be fermented without salt, but they tend to have a mushier texture. This was the case – this batch was a bit mushy and pretty sour. But mixed into the eggplant, zucchini, onion and tomato mixture I'd made, it tasted great. Also have enjoyed it mixed with tofu and rice. It's now day three with this jar, and I've acquired a taste for it and enjoy it straight up.

Having found these delicious options, you're probably wondering why I'm determined to try my hand at this. It's simple – these ready-made ones are quite expensive – the pint jar of BAO was about \$8, and the Rejuvenative Foods' kraut was even more.

So I'm gathering the data and getting ready to get myself in a pickle. Here's what I've gleaned from my reading:

Fermented is sometimes safer than fresh. According to Breidt, the lactic acid formed during the fermentation process destroys harmful bacteria – and that means that fermented vegetables can, in some cases, actually be safer than raw vegetables.

Everything needs to be really clean – your hands, your cutting board, your knives, your jars. Guess I already knew that! And your vegetables should be as fresh as possible. Sounds like fresh CSA veggies would be perfect, right?

"B" WEEK #16 9/16/2014
Thanks to Our Volunteers:

9/16 Pick-up: 5:00 to 8:00PM

Farnoosh Famouri-Lee

Melanie Topol

Alison artwell

Unclaimed Shares Delivery:

Alfred Rosenblatt

9/23 Pick-up: 5:00 to 8:00PM

Anny Sun

Chi Chung

Mandy Chan

Unclaimed Shares Delivery:

David Snyder

9/16 CAYUGA PICK-UP:
*(Shares will be held for
"A" pickup 9/23)*

FLOUR: Millet

**GRAIN: Hulled Barley,
Whole Oat Groats**

**BEAN: Black Turtle,
Pinto**

TUV HA'ARETZ CSA at the
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- **Tuv Ha'Aretz CSA:**
www.foresthillstuvcsa.com
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www.facebook.com/tuvFHJC
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- **Golden Earthworm:**
www.goldenearthworm.com
- **FHJC:** www.fhjc.org
- **Hazon:** www.hazon.org

Temperature matters. Ideally, it should be from 70°-75° F, at lower temps it may take longer. Below 60°, your veggies may not ferment at all. Above 75° and they may be mushy. So a coolish summer or early fall might be a good time to try fermenting.

According to most sources pickling and fermenting are not the same – but the terms seem to be somewhat interchangeable. Pickling, as best I can tell, is an umbrella term. It also includes quicker processes (such as vinegar-based methods) that don't produce the probiotics.

I think I'm ready to venture into pickle-land. As I'm somewhat salt-conscious, I'm curious to try a recipe that uses celery juice as the fermenting medium. I'd also like to ferment beets – but evidently, they are trickier. So to start, I'm going for something more basic like the Sauerkraut recipe from culturesforhealth.com (below).

Now all I have to do is clean my jars, and wait for cabbage to show up in the CSA box. And when you see me at pick up that week, encourage me to get started – and wish me luck!

BASIC SAUERKRAUT | culturesforhealth.com

1 medium head of cabbage


One of the following:

- 1 to 3 tbsp salt *or*
- 1 to 3 tbsp salt and ¼ cup whey *or*
- A starter culture such as Caldwell's Cultured Vegetable Starter or Body Ecology Starter Culture and salt as instructed for the specific culture you are working with

Chop or shred the cabbage. Sprinkle with salt. Work the cabbage with clean hands, potato masher, or large pestle until there is plenty of liquid and the cabbage is a bit mushy – can take about 10 minutes.

If using whey, add the whey and mix well. If using a starter culture, add the culture as specified by the instructions that came with it.

Stuff the cabbage into the fermenting container, pressing the cabbage underneath the liquid. If necessary, add water to completely cover cabbage. Place a clean cloth over the mouth of the container and leave to culture for 3 to 10 days (or longer) at room temperature.

Once the sauerkraut is finished, move to a lidded storage container. Store the sauerkraut in the refrigerator or in a root cellar after the culturing process. Many people find that this additional aging for 4 to 6 weeks improves the flavor. 

Sources

- *Fermenting Veggies at Home: Follow Food Safety ABCs* by Cookson Beecher | March 11, 2014. Downloaded from www.foodsafetynews.com/2014/03/fermenting-veggies-at-home-follow-food-safety-abcs/#.U_lhkWNabtk This article also includes a good history of fermenting as well as a sauerkraut recipe and some tips for how to ferment.
- culturesforhealth.com. Hundreds of recipes and a lot of advice for newbies.
- culturedfoodlife.com. This site offers a free e-book that teaches you the basics of producing fermented vegetables as well as kombucha and kefir.

Judy Trupin is a yoga teacher, ESOL instructor / professional development specialist and the author of the long-out-of-print "A Concoctionist Cookbook." Involved with CSAs since the '90s, she's been a co-chair of our CSA for the past few years. For info about her Kew Gardens yoga classes, contact her at trupinjet@gmail.com

9/16 What's in the Box:

**Lettuce, Collards,
Acorn Squash, Scallions,
Tomatoes, Green Beans,
Zucchini, Red Long Peppers**

FRUIT SHARE:

Damson Plums, Gala Apples
**NO HERB SHARE THIS WEEK – TO
BE CONTINUED NEXT WEEK**

BRAISED COLLARD GREENS

Marth Rose Shulman, nytimes.com | Serves 4

1 large bunch collard greens, about 1 1/2 pounds,
stemmed and washed in 2 changes of water

Salt to taste

2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil

1 onion, sliced very thin across the grain

2 to 4 garlic cloves, green shoots removed, sliced thin
1/4 to 1/2 tsp crushed red pepper flakes (optional)

Freshly squeezed lemon juice for serving

Bring a large pot of water to a boil. Fill a bowl with ice water. When the water comes to a boil, salt generously and add the collard greens. Blanch for four minutes and transfer to the ice water with a slotted spoon or skimmer. Drain, squeeze out extra water and coarsely chop or cut in thin ribbons. Set aside the cooking water.

Heat the oil over medium heat in a wide, lidded skillet or Dutch oven, and add the onion. Cook, stirring often, until it begins to soften, about 3 minutes. Add a generous pinch of salt and the garlic and crushed red pepper flakes, and continue to cook, stirring often, until the onion is tender, about five minutes. Add the collard greens, and stir together for a few minutes, then add 1 cup of the cooking water and salt to taste. Bring to a simmer, cover partially, and simmer over low heat for one hour, stirring often and adding more cooking water from time to time, so that the greens are always simmering in a small amount of liquid. Taste and adjust seasoning. Serve hot or warm, with a little fresh lemon juice if desired.

You can make this dish up to a day ahead and reheat in a little water or broth.

FARM NOTES

We are taking a break from the herb share just for this week – we will resume herb delivery next week.

HARVEST FESTIVAL 10 / 19 (Sunday)

Free for all CSA families & guests. Hayride & Walking Tours, Cooking Demos, Live Music, Kids' Activities, GIANT Haystack and more!