



Here are some recipes including my recipe for a sugar syrup for bottling fruit and the recipe I like for a Pickling Solution. Please find more detail in my two preserving courses **“Jams Jellies and Chutneys”** and **“Canning, Pickling and Fermenting”** on my website. These courses have videos, and lots of my favourite recipes and you can see me actually making my preserves in my kitchen.

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Sugar Syrup for bottling fruit:

I use this ratio for all my fruit, it is very light and not too sweet but if you want it sweeter just add more sugar. The fruit I bottle includes apple slices, pear quarters, peach slices, apricot quarters, plum halves, gooseberries and currants as that is what I grow but this syrup would be fine for any fruit.

For 600ml of water I add 100g of sugar and then heat gently together until the sugar has dissolved and the back of a wooden spoon shows no crystals when it is dipped in the solution.

Tips for bottling or canning fruit:

Always make sure your jars and equipment are sterilised

Wash and dry fruit in the best possible condition

Use the water bath method for creating a tight seal that will keep the fruit safe to eat for a year in your pantry.

Pickling Solution:

When I started pickling cucumbers I found that they were too vinegary for my liking - I wanted the taste of store bought dilled cucumbers, a bit salty, a little sweet and with a pleasant tang. I experimented until I got it right and the recipe is as follows. For smaller quantities just halve the recipe. The solution will keep in sterilised bottles over the pickling season, so I make it in large amounts so that the solution is on always on hand and I can pickle as I harvest, a few jars at a time.

1 litre vinegar

1 litre water

75g pickling salt

200g of sugar or taste as you like it, often I use less.

The addition of a clove of garlic, dill, chilli or herbs.

The important ratio is the salt, vinegar and water - the rest is up to you.

You need to use a vinegar that is 5% acidity. I use white pickling vinegar for my light coloured veg like cucumbers, beans and chillies and cider vinegar for onions and beetroot when I like the darker colour.

Pickling salt is pure sea salt not table salt which has anti caking agents in it and is not suitable.

Tips to remember:

Cut off the blossom end and the stalk end of cucumbers to make sure they stay crisp.

Cut your vegetables to the height of the jars with the ends coming up to the beginning of the jar screw rim. (if the veg are in chunks this doesn't matter!)

Useful flavours to add to the jar are whole cloves of garlic, peppercorns, chilli flakes and fresh herbs like Dill or herb seeds such as Coriander, Fennel and Dill.

Fermenting:

Cabbage Kimchi:

Makes 2 x 1 litre preserving jars.

This is the classic Korean Kimchi recipe I use.

Ingredients:

1 kg napa cabbage cored and sliced into 5cm strips.

20g pickling salt

1 apple peeled and cut into chunks

5 cloves minced garlic

5cm thumb of ginger peeled and sliced

1 tbsp granulated sugar

3 tbsp of fish sauce

3 tbsp of gochugaru (Korean red pepper flakes)

1 medium Daikon radish cut into strips

A bunch of spring onions cut into 2.5cm slices

3 large carrots peeled and grated.

Method:

Keep some washed outside leaves of the cabbage to make a covering to go under the fermentation weight.

Wash, core and slice the cabbage into 5cm strips

In a large ceramic or glass bowl combine cabbage slices with salt and a litre of water. Cover the bowl and allow to stand at room temperature for at least 2 hours, preferably overnight.

In a food processor or blender, puree the apple garlic, ginger and sugar until smooth. Add the fish sauce and gochugaru to combine.

Drain the cabbage and put it into a clean bowl and combine with radish, green onions and carrots. Add the pureed spiced mixture and combine well. Divide the cabbage mixture evenly between two 1 litre jars pressing down firmly to remove as many air pockets as you can. Place a cabbage leaf over the vegetables and then a fermentation weight or a jam jar filled with water - something to keep the veg under the brine. There won't be enough brine at this early stage to cover everything but over the next 24 hours there should be more. If you still need more liquid to cover the weighted veg then make up some more brine as in the Kohl Rabi Kimchi recipe above at a ratio of 1 litre of water to 22g pickling salt and add that. Remember the rhyme "Under the brine and all will be fine"!

Place a piece of muslin over the jars and fix in place either with the screw band of the preserving jars or with rubber bands. Place each jar on a plate to catch any overflowing brine in a dark cool place. It should take between 24 and 36 hours for fermentation to take place but taste as you go. Once it is as you want it tighten put on the lids and keep in the fridge. It will continue to ferment and the taste will get better and better....it just ferments much more slowly.

If you want to can the Kimchi for long term storage then follow the instructions for canning the pickled beans or the Sauerkraut. I find that storing it in the fridge works well for us and it will last there for months.

Sauerkraut:

This is so easy to make and is delicious and very good for you. I make it in a very similar way to the Kimchi above.

1.5kg of sliced cabbage is exactly the right amount for a large 2 litre kilner jar. The Sauerkraut can be made in a large bowl or crock and divided up later into smaller jars if you want.

The important thing to remember is the ratio of salt to cabbage. It must be salty enough to produce the wonderful lactic acid that makes the Sauerkraut safe to eat and taste sour but not so salty that it tastes horrible.

Many recipes call for 2% salt but I found this a bit too salty. I researched it and saw that many German recipes use 1.5% salt and some even 1%. I have successfully always made my sauerkraut with 1.5% salt and it has kept beautifully and doesn't taste too salty.

For 1 kg of cabbage I use 15g pickling salt.

Ingredients for a 2 litre jar or two 1 litre jars:

1.5kg of cored and washed white cabbage, sliced as thinly as you can.

23g pickling salt

A Scattering of caraway seeds (optional) about 7g

Method:

Wash the cabbage carefully, reserving some outside leaves for covering the Sauerkraut under the fermentation weight.

Make sure everything is clean and the jar sterilised but be careful not to use any antibacterial or harsh soaps on the utensils or your hands as this will inhibit the good bacteria.

Shred the cabbage and put in a bowl with the salt, sprinkling and massaging it in and turning it in the bowl. Really squeeze and knead it with all your strength! Once all the salt is mixed in let it stand for 10 minutes. The brine should be starting to form.

Massage again and rest for another 10 mins. Repeat one more time.

Using a wooden tool or your hands press the cabbage down in the jar until the brine comes to the surface. Do this as you fill the jar layer by layer.

Place an outside leaf of the cabbage on the surface and use a weight or fill a plastic bag with water to act as a weight to keep the cabbage under the brine. Cover with a ring and a piece of muslin and leave the clip lid off (If using a clip lid jar) to allow any air bubbles and gasses to escape. If the lid is off then keep the muslin on with a rubber band. Stand on a plate to catch any that overflows.

If after 24 hours there is not enough brine mix some up - 1 litre of water and 22g of pickling salt ratio bought to a boil to dissolve the salt. Cool to room temperature and keep it handy to make sure the very top of your ferment is covered. I find that this is necessary after the first day of fermenting if there is not quite enough brine made by the ferment itself. I use very little but just make sure the ferment and the fermenting weight are covered. Beware of adding any extra brine later - just check it at this stage not later on as then it will make the Sauerkraut brown. Just remember the all important rule with fermenting....." Under the brine and all will be fine".

Leave the jar somewhere at room temperature until it tastes like you want it. This can be from five days to up to two weeks or even longer it will get sourer as it ferments - keep tasting it to see when you like it. Keep making sure there is enough brine. Once you put it into the fridge you will see the brine evaporates a bit so if you need to add more brine then and don't want it to turn brown, add a mix of half bottled lemon juice and half water to keep the ferment covered. Also keep the tops and inside rims of the jars clean with a paper towel. Just keep an eye on it.

The Sauerkraut will keep in the fridge for a long time but you can freeze it. Also if you want to waterbath smaller jars then treat it exactly like the beans and cucumbers above. Make sure the new jars are sterilised and drain off the brine to heat and simmer for a few minutes. Transfer the cabbage into the new jars and once the brine has cooled add it to the jars. This will stop the fermentation process. Put on the lids and water bath for 15 - 20 minutes and get a good seal by cooling under a towel duvet. The Sauerkraut will then store at room temperature in your pantry.

Sriracha sauce:

I made this with birds eye chillies and it was too hot to eat. I recommend you make it with a less hot chill and take out the seeds!

Ingredients:

- 600g of red chillies, stalks removed (and seeds if you don't want it too hot)
- 10 garlic cloves, peeled
- 4 tsp sea salt
- 4 tbsp of rice vinegar
- 2 tbsp of fish sauce
- 75g of soft light brown sugar
- 75g of caster sugar

Method:

Put the chillies, garlic, salt and sugar in a blender and whizz to a rough purée. Pour into a sterilised jar or bowl and cover. Leave to ferment for 3 days, removing the lid to allow the air to escape each day.

Transfer to a blender and blitz again until very smooth. Add to a saucepan with the vinegar and fish sauce, bring to a simmer and cook for a few minutes.

Taste and adjust seasoning, then pour into sterilised jars. The sauce will keep in the fridge for 2–3 months or you can put it in jars and water bath it to create a good seal in which case it will keep in your pantry for a year.

Apple Cider Vinegar:

This is a fantastic way to use the apple peelings and cores of apples you are processing in the autumn. And it is so very good for our guts and immune system. A spoonful every day during winter will give it a great boost and keep those viruses away.

Ingredients:

- organic apple scraps
- 2 tbsp sugar
- 500ml water

Method:

Sterilise a one litre jar

Fill the jar $\frac{3}{4}$ full with apple scraps. If you are using whole apples, roughly chop them up before you put them in the jar.

Dissolve the cane sugar into the water.

Pour sugar water over the apples until they are completely submerged. Add a little additional water if needed to make sure the apples are covered.

Weigh down the apples with a fermentation weight or with the small glass jar filled with water to make it heavy. Any apples that are exposed to the air could mould.

Cover with a piece of muslin or a coffee filter and secure with the screw band of the jar or with a rubber band.

Store in a dark place at room temperature. I put mine in my store but a kitchen cupboard would be fine.

Leave it for approximately 3 weeks. Check on it every few days to make sure the apples are staying under the water and to make sure no mould is growing.

After 3 weeks, it will still smell fairly sweet. Strain the apples pieces out and return the liquid to the jar. Compost the scraps.

Re-cover and put the jar back in a dark spot for another 3-4 weeks, stirring every few days. When the vinegar has reached the "tartness" you like you can put a lid on it or transfer it to a different jar with a lid and start using it!



My Pantry in the autumn stuffed with preserves and veg from the garden.