

How to Make Kimchi

The iconic food of Korean culture; Korean kitchens create more than 100 kinds of kimchi, using everything from cabbage to watermelon skin and even pumpkin blossom in summer. Kimchi is made by a process called lacto-fermentation; the same process used to create sauerkraut and traditional dill pickles. The term kimchi has been derived from the Korean word 'shimchae' which literally means 'salting of vegetables' and has been made in Korea since around the 7th century.

Kimchi is packed with a range of vitamins including vitamins A, C, B1 & B2, minerals iron, calcium & selenium, amino acids, antioxidants and probiotics. Kimchi's impressive nutritional profile means it can help to support digestion and elimination, immune health, cardiovascular health, protect against cancer and support weight management amongst many other benefits. A special type of kimchi known as 'space kimchi' has even been taken into space by astronauts!

Ingredients:

- 1 litre glass jar with canning lid or plastic lid
- 1 medium head cabbage
- ¼ cup sea salt (free of iodine & anti-caking agents which can inhibit fermentation)
- Filtered water (chlorinated water can inhibit fermentation so use spring, filtered or distilled)
- 1 tablespoon grated garlic (5-6 cloves)
- 1 teaspoon grated ginger
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 1-5 tablespoons Korean red pepper flakes (Kimchi can be made hot or mild depending on your preference)
- 225g Korean radish or daikon peeled and cut into matchsticks
- 4 spring onions, trimmed and cut into 1 inch pieces

Useful Resources:

The Art of Fermentation by Sandor Katz



Method:

1. Slice the cabbage lengthways into quarters, remove the core, cut across each quarter into 2-inch strips.
2. Place cabbage and salt in a large bowl. Massage salt into cabbage until it starts to soften then cover the cabbage with water (you may want to use gloves for this bit!). Place a plate on top and weigh down with something heavy like a tin of beans. Stand for 1-2 hours.
3. Rinse the cabbage under cold water 3 times, drain in a colander for 15-20 minutes. Rinse and dry the large bowl.
4. Combine together garlic, ginger, sugar and 3 tablespoons water in a small bowl and mix to form a paste. Add the Korean red pepper (1-5 tablespoons according to your taste) and mix well.
5. Squeeze out any remaining water from the cabbage, return to the large bowl, add the radish, spring onions and paste. Mix together thoroughly to ensure all the vegetables are well coated (gloves useful again here!).
6. Put the kimchi into the jar. Press down well until the salty liquid rises above the vegetables. Leave at least 1 inch of space between the liquid and the top of the jar. Place the lid securely onto the jar.
7. Stand the jar in a bowl and leave to ferment at room temperature for 1-5 days. You may start to see bubbles in the jar and some of the liquid may leak out of the lid – the bowl will catch any overflow.
8. You can check the kimchi daily by pressing down on the vegetables with a clean spoon to make sure they remain submerged under the salty liquid. It's useful to regularly taste a little – when the kimchi is ripe to taste, transfer the jar to the fridge – it's best to leave it for another week or two before eating.