Basic Sauerkraut
Makes about 2 quarts

Fermenting vegetables not only increases their shelf life and preserves them, but it also enhances their flavor and increases their nutritional value! Sauerkraut—fermented cabbage—is full of live enzymes and bacteria that improve digestion and help heal a damaged gut. Eating fermented foods with your meals will help you to absorb nutrients more efficiently and add a wonderful new taste to your food.

3 lbs cabbage (about 1 medium head)
~1 Tbs unrefined sea salt
2 Tbs caraway seeds, optional

Shred the cabbage and place in a large bowl. Sprinkle with salt (taste to ensure it is not too salty or under-salted; adjust to taste) and mix well. Begin to crush the cabbage with your hands and “massage” it for several minutes to begin releasing the water. If crushing becomes too tiresome on your arms, you can let it sit 15 minutes to let the cabbage begin to soften. Taste for saltiness at this point. If it is not salty enough to your taste, add a little more salt. If it is too salty, either add more cabbage or rinse in a colander with water. The saltiness will generally not change during fermentation, so get it to taste now so you will like the end result! If using, add caraway seeds and mix well.

Transfer to a fermenting crock or glass jar. Using a wooden dowel or spoon, begin to pound the cabbage. The action of crushing the cabbage releases the water from its cells; the water combines with the salt to create a brine that will ferment and preserve the cabbage. This also pushes as much air as possible out of the jar. The cabbage should be softened and a good amount of brine should be present. Place a cabbage leaf on top of the kraut and press the cabbage firmly into the jar so the brine rises above it. Optional: Place a weight on top of the vegetables, ensuring that they stay submerged in brine the whole time they ferment to prevent oxygen from getting in—the bacteria you are wanting here are anaerobic. If using a jar with a lid this may not always be necessary.

Let sit for two weeks to fully ferment (or up to 21 days if you are patient!), checking every few days for surface mold—which can easily be scraped off and discarded without tossing the whole batch—or for a shortage of brine. Continue to press the cabbage below the brine to keep it from spoiling and drying out. Transfer to the refrigerator when fermented to your liking. This will keep for up to 1 year in the fridge or root cellar if kept submerged in brine.

Ideas for variations on basic sauerkraut—adjust salt as needed when adding more vegetables:

Curtido: use red cabbage, and add grated carrot, cilantro, jalapeno, lime juice, onion and garlic.
Sunnyside: use green or savoy cabbage, fresh turmeric root, ginger root, golden beet and lemon.
Curry Kraut: to cabbage, add garlic, onion, ginger, turmeric and curry powder Dill and Garlic;
Spicy Pickled Cauliflower and Carrots
Makes 2 quarts

This is a great snack, side dish or condiment to any meal, and is a great way to get fermented veggies in your diet! Fermenting the cauliflower and carrots in a brine adds lots of gut-friendly probiotics and creates a wonderful new flavor that even kids will love. You can make this as spicy or as mild as you'd like by changing the amount of peppers added. Experiment with your favorite vegetables and see what is your favorite. This gives you the basic formula for brined vegetables so you can get creative!

1 small head cauliflower (1 to 1 1/2 lbs), cut into florets
2 medium carrots, cut into sticks or coins
1 jalapeno or serrano pepper, sliced
1/4 cup yellow onion, thinly-sliced
6-8 cloves garlic, crushed
1/2 Tbs dried dill or 2 Tbs fresh, chopped

Veggie Brine: ½ cup salt to 1 gallon water—will need about ½ gallon for this recipe
Optional: 4 Tbs liquid whey, drained from plain yogurt

Chop veggies and place into one 2 quart jar or two 1 quart jars. Add spices and fill to the top with the salt water brine. It is important that the water is filtered, as chlorinated water can have an ill effect on the fermentation process and the taste of the resulting product.

Place the lid on and release slightly so it is not on too tight. Set jars in a dry and cool spot in the house where they won't be hit by a lot of direct sunlight.
Let sit 1 week and taste the cauliflower. You may refrigerate and begin to eat at this point. If you like your fermented veggies a little more tangy and "pickled" tasting, let sit another few days up to 2 weeks.

Every 2-3 days, "burp" the jar(s) by opening the lid and taking it off, then putting it right back on. This lets any extra CO2 build up out, so the jars don't explode. The bacterial waste product is CO2, so there can be lots of this in the jar if you don't burp them periodically. At this time, also check for any surface mold or yeast forming. If it is, scrape of and discard, and be sure your vegetables are fully submerged in the brine.

When ready, place in the refrigerator to slow down the fermentation process and help increase the shelf life. These will keep for several months in the fridge.

**This basic brine technique will work to brine just about any vegetable. Radishes, carrots and garlic are great pickled.
To make this recipe for dilly beans, blanch the green beans before fermenting and add dill and other spices as desired.
For pickles, add 3-5 grape, oak, or raspberry leaves per half gallon jar to keep the pickles crisp. Also, increase the salt to a 3.5% brine, which is ¾ c salt to 1 gallon water.***
Kim Chi
Makes 2 quarts

1 large head napa cabbage or 2 medium heads bok choy, cleaned and halved lengthwise
Brine: 1 cup salt to 1 gallon water; will need about ½ gallon

2 medium daikon, thinly-sliced
2 medium carrots, thinly-sliced
4” ginger, thinly-sliced
1 bunch scallions, sliced
6-8 cloves garlic, chopped
1 hot pepper, sliced
1 tsp red chili flakes or 2 tsp Korean chili powder (gochugaru)

Place cleaned and halved heads of bok choy in a large bowl. Completely cover with brine and place a plate on top of the bok choy to keep submerged.
Let sit at least 6 hours or up to overnight in the brine.

Remove the bok choy from the brine, draining and saving the liquid to the side.
Chop the bok choy and add to a large mixing bowl.
In a food processor or blender, combine the garlic, ginger, hot peppers and chili flakes/powder. Puree until well-mixed, creating a thick paste. Add this puree, along with the daikon and carrot, to the bok choy and mix together using gloved hands.
Pack into a half gallon jar or two 1-quart jars, pressing into the jar until the brine rises above the vegetables. If not enough brine is present to keep the vegetables submerged, add some of the reserved brine to the jar to cover.
Place a weight on top of the vegetables to keep submerged. Cover with a lid, screwed on not too tightly, and let sit at room temperature for 5 days to 2 weeks, depending on conditions and taste preference.
Transfer to the fridge when fermentation is complete, where this will keep for up to 1 year.

Veg Fermentation Grocery List
Vegetables: cabbage, onions, garlic, carrots, cauliflower, bok choy or napa cabbage, ginger, scallions, daikon radish, hot peppers
Unrefined sea salt (Redmond, Celtic, Himalayan, etc.)
Dried or fresh herbs—dill, chili flakes, etc.
Gochugaru (Korean chili flakes)
Plain yogurt, full-fat (for making whey starter)
Glass jars and plastic lids
Fermentation weights (Pickle Pebbles)
Air locks (Pickle Pipes)
Wooden tamper

Follow me on Instagram @brineandbroth or find more recipes at www.brineandbroth.com