

SAUERKRAUT

Courtesy of Executive Chef Matthew Weingarten of Inside Park at St. Bart's, New York City

Equipment:

Mandoline or a very sharp knife
Pair of gloves
Ceramic crock, or heavy-gauge food grade plastic tub
Large plate
2 small garbage bags
Cool place to store the cabbage

Ingredients:

5 pounds cabbage (about two large heads)
1/4 cup kosher salt
8 juniper berries
3 fresh bay leaves

Quarter each head of cabbage and then slice it into 1/4-inch ribbons on your mandoline or with your knife. In a large bowl, mix together the rest of the ingredients with the cabbage. Put on your gloves and massage the mix lightly until you start to see a good amount of juice being exuded from the cabbage. Pack all of this into a sterilized crock, pushing down firmly as you go. Place a heavy plate on top, and push down until the cabbage is fully submerged by the cabbage juices.

Keeping the cabbage completely submerged is what keeps the sauerkraut from spoiling. In order to achieve this, make a weight of water out of the garbage bags by filling one garbage bag halfway with water, and tie off securely. Then place this bag inside the other garbage bag and do the same. Place the bag weight on top of the plate in the crock and voila, your cabbage is now properly weighted.

Place the crock in a cool (non-refrigerated) place for 10 to 14 days. The cabbage will continue to release liquid and the lactic fermentation, which is what makes the cabbage "sour", should begin after about 72 hours. I actually like my sauerkraut best, after the fourth or fifth day, when it is half-saur kraut.

When you want to use, simply remove the bag and plate. Take out your portion with tongs, a spoon or a gloved hand and replace the lid and bag. Your sauerkraut does not ever have to be refrigerated. However, once it has soured to your liking, you may place it in your refrigerator to halt the pickling process.

Keeps up to 6 months.

Inside Park at St. Bart's, Park Avenue and 50th Street, New York City, (212) 593-3333
www.insideparknyc.com