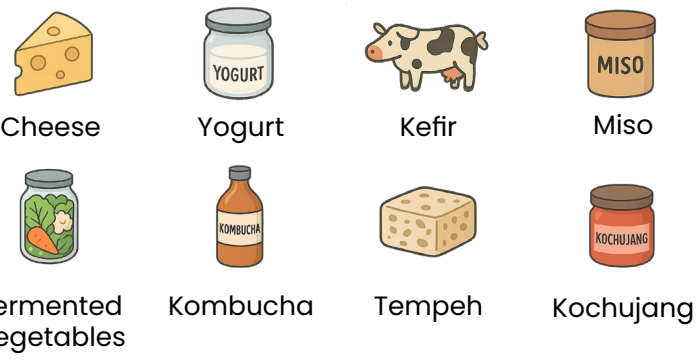
2026
Calendar

Canadian Fermented Foods Initiative

WHAT ARE FERMENTED FOODS?

Fermented foods are defined as foods made through desired microbial growth and enzymatic conversions of food components.

LIVE MICROBES PRESENT



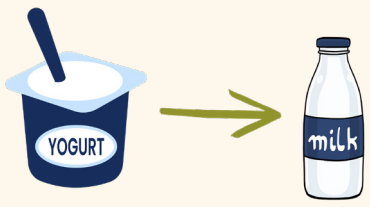
Cheese | Yogurt | Kefir | Miso | Fermented Vegetables | Kombucha | Tempeh | Kochujang

MICROBES KILLED OR REMOVED IN THE PROCESS

Vinegar | Bread | Soy Sauce | Sausage

EXAMPLE

Bacterial cultures eat lactose, producing lactic acid. This changes milk's flavor, texture and nutrients, turning it into yogurt.



There are thousands of fermented foods and beverages consumed globally.

Visit **fermentedfoods.ca** to learn more!

Canadian Fermented Foods Initiative

THE PRESERVING CHEF
WITH CERTIFIED MASTER FOOD PRESERVER
CHEF CONNOR FLYNN

The CFFI has partnered with Chef Connor Flynn, a master food preserver, to show how easy it is to start fermenting at home. Throughout this calendar, you'll find recipes he has created, along with tips on how to incorporate fermented foods into your diet.

JANUARY

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1 New Year's Day	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

Sauerkraut

Yield: 1 quart canning jar
Preparation Time: 15-25 minutes
Fermenting Time: minimum 14 days

Ingredients:

- 2 lbs (10 cups) of green cabbage
- 1 tbsp pickling Salt
- 1 tsp of caraway seed
  (optional for traditional recipe)

Directions

1. Remove the first couple layers of outer leaves if they don't look the freshest.
2. Core the cabbage and rinse under cold water then shred or slice evenly.
3. Put cabbage in a large bowl, sprinkle with salt and caraway (optional).
4. Toss cabbage with salt, then pound and squeeze using a kraut smasher, potato masher, or your fist.
5. You'll know it's ready when the cabbage volume halves and brine collects at the bottom. If not, keep going.
6. Pack cabbage and brine into a quart jar, pressing each layer so liquid rises and bubbles above the cabbage (should fit into one quart jar).
7. Place a weight or cabbage core in the jar to keep cabbage submerged under the brine (this is key to having a ferment that is free from bad microbial growth).
8. Leave at least 1 inch head space, after the fermenting weight is added to the top of the cabbage mixture. Place a fermenting top (pickle pipe, carboy, or regular canning lid and ring) on the top of the jar and loosely thread it on.
9. Place the jar in a cool to warm dark place for fermentation.
10. Check sauerkraut daily at first, then every other day to make sure the cabbage is submerged. Scoop out any cabbage or seeds that are floating. Taste after 2 weeks and ferment longer until the desired taste is reached.

FEBRUARY

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28

EATING FERMENTED FOODS

FERMENTED FOOD

BENEFITS

Can enhance food nutrient content and bioavailability while reducing food spoilage.

May increase gut microbiota diversity and may help regulate the immune system.

May reduce risk for certain chronic diseases when consumed regularly.

But more research is needed.

Fermented foods come in many forms, using different ingredients and techniques. Though store-bought options are convenient, modern production can involve shortcuts that affect quality and potential health benefits.

- Some products that claim to be fermented only add bacteria later in production, meaning the food hasn't actually undergone true fermentation.
- Authentic kombucha is created by fermenting tea with a symbiotic culture of bacteria and yeasts (SCOBY) and kefir is traditionally made by adding a 'kefir grain' to whole milk. However, most commercial kombuchas and kefirs use alternative processes that typically lack traditional microbes.
- Pasteurization extends shelf life but kills live cultures and while fermented foods with dead or removed microbes can still offer some benefits, they likely have different effects compared to those with live microbes.

MARCH

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

Kraut-Chi

Yield: 1 quart canning jar
Preparation Time: 15-25 minutes
Fermenting Time: minimum 4 days

Ingredients:

- 2 ½ lbs (12.5 cups) green cabbage
- 1 heaping tbsp pickling salt
- 1/2 cup gochugaru powder (substitute: ¼ cup paprika and ¼ cup chili powder)
- 1 tsp minced fresh garlic
- 2 tsp minced fresh ginger
- 3 stalks of green onion sliced thin
- 1 carrot, shredded or cut into matchsticks

Directions

1. Gently wash the cabbage with cold water and remove the outer leaves. Then, cut it in half lengthwise and cut a V-shape around the core to remove it.
2. At the 'V', cut the cabbage in half again. Flip the cabbage down on its flat side and thinly slice or shred using a cheese grater.
3. Combine into a large bowl the shredded cabbage with shredded vegetables (carrot, green onion, garlic, ginger) and add gochugaru and salt. Use less gochugaru for a milder Kraut-Chi.
4. Toss and mix the vegetable mixture by hand (wear gloves as chili can irritate). Then alternate pounding and squeezing the mixture using a kraut smasher, potato masher, or your fist.
5. It's done when the vegetables have visibly shrunk by half and there's plenty of brine in the bowl. If not, keep going!
6. Pack the cabbage and brine into a quart jar, compressing each layer so the liquid bubbles over. All the vegetables should fit in the jar.
7. You should have at least one inch of head space after the fermenting weight is added to the top of the vegetable/brine mixture.
8. Place a fermenting top (pickle pipe, carboy, or regular canning lid and ring) on the top of the jar and loosely thread it on. Place the jar in a cool to warm dark place during fermentation.
9. Check your Kraut-Chi every day for the first couple of days and every other day after that to ensure that the head space is correct and to make sure that there is no cabbage/vegetables floating above the brine.
10. After 4 days, taste your Kraut-Chi to check if you like the flavour. If you prefer more of a sour flavour, continue to ferment until the desired taste is reached.

APRIL

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1	2	3 Good Friday	4
5	6 Easter Monday	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

POTENTIAL HEALTH BENEFITS OF FERMENTED FOODS

1 Can support gut health and digestion

- Improve digestion
- Increase nutrient absorption, including iron, calcium and magnesium
- Increase bloating by lowering "FODMAP"

Example

Sourdough bread is often easier to digest because fermentation breaks down gluten (partially), FODMAPs and fructans which might cause sensitivity in many people.

2 Help regulate blood sugar

- Lower blood sugar levels and improve long-term blood sugar control
- Improved insulin sensitivity
- Reduce blood sugar spikes after meals

Did you know?

Sourdough bread and vinegar may lead to improved blood sugar control than their non-fermented counterparts.

3 Boosts immunity and reduce inflammation

- Reduce inflammatory markers
- Possibly help prevent infections like colds or pneumonia

Did you know?

Mothers who eat more fermented foods during pregnancy may lower the risk of eczema and allergies in their babies.

4 May support health function

- Lower low-density lipoprotein ("bad") cholesterol
- Better blood pressure
- Improved blood vessel health

Example

In several studies, kefir helped reduce blood pressure, cholesterol and inflammation markers.

*FODMAP: Fermentable oligosaccharides, disaccharides, monosaccharides and polyols.

MAY

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18 Victoria Day	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

Fermented Cucumbers

(Dill Pickles)

Yield: 1 quart canning jar
Preparation Time: 15-25 minutes
Fermenting Time: minimum 4 days

Ingredients:

- 2 lbs (10 cups) of 4-inch (10 cm) pickling cucumbers
- 1 tbsp dill seed or 2 heads fresh or dry dill weed or 3 sprigs of fresh dill
- 2 tbsps canning and pickling salt
- 1/8 cup vinegar (5%)
- 4 cups water

Directions

1. Wash cucumbers under running water, scrubbing to remove soil. Trim 1/16 inch off the blossom end (discard it) and leave 1/4 inch of stem.
2. Place half of the dill and spices at the bottom of a clean quart canning jar.
3. Add cucumbers by stacking on their side with the jar horizontal, then top with the remaining dill and spices. Try to gently squeeze as many cucumbers in the jar as possible.
4. Dissolve salt in vinegar and water by whisking in a medium-sized mixing bowl, then pour into the quart jar over cucumbers.
5. Add the fermentation weight to keep cucumbers submerged. Make sure you have at least an inch of head space from the top of the brine to the top of the quart jar.
6. Store in a cool to warm dark place for 3–4 weeks until it reaches the desired taste.

JUNE

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

POTENTIAL HEALTH BENEFITS OF FERMENTED FOODS

May support with mental health

- Help ease symptoms of anxiety and depression
- Influence the brain through the “gut-brain axis”
- Support mood via anti-inflammatory and microbial pathways

  Early research on fermented foods like kefir and kombucha shows promise in supporting emotional well-being.

Healthy aging and weight management

- Lower body mass index (BMI)
- Better weight control
- Improved metabolic health and lower chronic disease risk

  In surveys, Canadians who grew up eating home-fermented foods had better overall health outcomes.

May prevent some cancers

- Reduced risks of colorectal, bladder and breast cancer

  This might be due to anti-inflammatory compounds and immune-regulating effects of certain microbes and the products of their fermentation.

JULY

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1 Canada Day	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

Sauerkraut Coleslaw

Yield: 1 quart canning jar
Preparation Time: 15-25 minutes
Fermenting Time: minimum 4 days

Cabbage Base Ingredients:

- 2 lbs (10 cups) of cabbage
- 2 tbsp kosher salt
- 1 cup prepared sauerkraut, drained and roughly chopped
- 2 large carrots, julienned or grated
- 1/2 red onion, thinly sliced

Dressing Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup mayonnaise
- 2 tbsp apple cider vinegar
- 1 tbsp Dijon mustard
- 1 tbsp honey or sugar
- 1/2 tsp caraway seeds (optional)
- 1/4 tsp celery seed
- Fresh black pepper to taste

Directions

Prepare the Cabbage:

1. Place the shredded cabbage in a large colander and toss with the kosher salt, making sure it's evenly distributed.
2. Set the colander over a bowl and let it sit for 1-2 hours at room temperature to draw out the cabbage's moisture.
3. After the waiting period, rinse and toss the salted cabbage thoroughly under cold running water.
4. Using your hands or a clean kitchen towel, squeeze the cabbage in small batches to remove as much water as possible. The cabbage should feel significantly drier and slightly wilted.

Assemble the Coleslaw:

1. In a large mixing bowl, combine the drained cabbage, chopped sauerkraut (see February's recipe), carrots and red onion.
2. In a separate small bowl, whisk together mayonnaise, apple cider vinegar, Dijon mustard, honey, caraway seeds (if using), celery seed and black pepper.
3. Pour the dressing over the cabbage mixture and toss thoroughly to coat everything evenly.
4. Taste and adjust seasoning as needed.

Rest and Serve:

Let the coleslaw rest in the refrigerator for at least 30 minutes before serving. The coleslaw will keep for 3-4 days refrigerated, though it's best within the first two days.

AUGUST

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

Marinated Bulgur Wheat Salad with Beet Sauerkraut

Serves 6-8 as a side dish or 4 as a main course.

Ingredients:

For the Bulgur Base:

- 1 cup fine bulgur wheat
- 1½ cups boiling water
- 1 tsp salt

For the Salad:

- 3/4 cup beet sauerkraut, drained and roughly chopped
- 1/2 cup dried cherries or cranberries
- 1/2 cup sliced almonds, toasted
- 1/2 medium red onion, thinly sliced
- 4 oz feta cheese, crumbled
- 4 cups fresh baby spinach, roughly chopped
- 1/2 cup fresh parsley, chopped

For the Maple Vinaigrette:

- 1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil
- 3 tbsp apple cider vinegar
- 2 tbsp pure maple syrup
- 1 tbsp Dijon mustard
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1/4 tsp black pepper
- Pinch of red pepper flakes (optional)

Directions

Prepare the Bulgur:

1. Place bulgur wheat in a large bowl and pour boiling water over it. Add salt and stir.
2. Cover tightly with plastic wrap or a lid and let stand for 30 minutes until tender and the water is absorbed.
3. Fluff with a fork and let cool to room temperature.

Make the Vinaigrette:

1. In a small bowl or jar, whisk together olive oil apple cider vinegar, maple syrup, Dijon mustard, minced garlic, salt, pepper and red pepper flakes if using.
2. Taste and adjust sweetness or acidity as needed.

Toast the Almonds:

1. Heat a dry skillet over medium heat.
2. Add sliced almonds and toast for 3-4 minutes, stirring frequently, until golden brown and fragrant.
3. Remove from heat and let cool.

Assemble the Marinade

1. Add the cooled bulgur to a large serving bowl.
2. Add beet sauerkraut, dried cherries, toasted almonds and sliced red onion.
3. Pour the vinaigrette over the mixture and toss thoroughly.
4. Cover and refrigerate for at least 2 hours, or preferably overnight, to allow flavours to develop.

Final Assembly

1. Just before serving, add the chopped spinach, fresh parsley and crumbled feta cheese.
2. Toss gently to combine.
3. Taste and adjust seasoning with additional salt, pepper, or vinaigrette as needed.

SEPTEMBER

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7 Labour Day	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30 National Day for Truth and Reconciliation			

Ginger Bug and Natural Soda

Best Practices

- Use chlorine-free water: Chlorine can kill beneficial microbes. If you don't have a filter, leave tap water uncovered overnight to allow chlorine to dissipate.
- Choose organic ginger: Conventional ginger may be irradiated, destroying natural yeasts and bacteria needed for fermentation.
- Use real sugar: Cane sugar works best for consistent results. While honey or maple syrup can be used, they may cause issues. Sugar fuels fermentation and most of it is consumed during the process.
- Seal tightly: Unlike some ferments, a ginger bug thrives in an airtight environment. Avoid cheesecloth; use a secure lid.

Ginger Bug Ingredients:

- 3 cups filtered water
- 3 tsp organic sugar
- 3 tsp organic ginger, unpeeled and diced or grated
- Additional sugar and ginger for daily feedings

Ginger Bug Directions

1. Combine ingredients: Add water, sugar and ginger to a quart-size jar.
2. Seal and ferment: Close jar with an airtight lid, shake to mix and place in a warm spot for 24 hours.
3. Feed daily: For 4–6 days, add 1 tsp sugar and 1 tsp ginger each day. Stir well. By the end of the week, the mixture should bubble and smell slightly yeasty.
4. Ready to use: Once active, use immediately for soda or refrigerate for up to one week.

Natural Soda Ingredients

- 1/2 cup ginger bug (strained)
- 7½ cups of liquid (sweetened herbal tea or juice)

Natural Soda Directions

1. Combine: Mix ginger bug with prepared liquid.
2. Bottle: Transfer to flip-top bottles, leaving 1/2-inch head space.
3. Ferment: Leave at room temperature for 2–3 days.
4. Refrigerate: Chill for up to several months before serving.

OCTOBER

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12 Thanksgiving Day	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

Homemade Yogurt

Serves 8

Yield: 7½ cups
Preparation Time: 10 minutes
Cook Time: 15 minutes
Active Time: 2 hours
Setting and Refrigeration: 65 hours
Total Time: 65 hours 25 minutes

Ingredients:

- 7½ cups milk
- 2 tbsp (30 mL) plain yogurt with active live cultures (check ingredients for *Lactobacillus*)

Equipment:

- Medium saucepan (3 quart)
- Glass jars (pint or quart canning jars)

Directions

1. Heat milk: In a medium saucepan, gently heat milk over medium heat until it reaches 180°F (82°C). Maintain between 180–190°F (82–88°C) for 10–30 minutes to concentrate proteins and fats for desired texture.
2. Cool milk: Allow milk to cool to about 110°F (43°C).
3. Add starter: Mix yogurt with a few spoonfuls of warm milk in a small bowl, then stir this mixture into the lukewarm milk.
4. Incubate: Transfer cultured milk to jars or an incubating device (yogurt maker, Instant Pot, slow cooker, or warm environment). Cover and maintain warmth (around 110°F) using your preferred method.
5. Ferment: Let yogurt set for 3–18 hours depending on temperature. For a stronger culture, allow up to 12 additional hours at room temperature. Taste and texture will vary with time.
6. Refrigerate: Once set, chill yogurt for 2–3 days before eating for the best flavor. Strain for Greek yogurt if desired. Reserve a few tablespoons for future batches.

Notes

- Milk: Any fat percentage works; whole milk yields richer yogurt. Avoid ultra-pasteurized milk for the best results.
- Starter: Use plain yogurt with live cultures or freeze-dried starters (follow manufacturer instructions).

Make Ahead and Storage

Refrigerate yogurt in sealed quart jars for up to 2 weeks. For culturing new batches, use within 1 week to ensure a strong culture.

NOVEMBER

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11 Remembrance Day	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

Homemade Milk Kefir

Yield: 4 cups

Ingredients:

- 1 tsp to 1 tbsp kefir grains
- 1–4 cups milk (avoid ultra-pasteurized; whole milk recommended, but any milk from skim to 3.25% works)

Equipment:

- 1 quart (32 oz) glass canning jar
- Cheesecloth with metal band or breathable lid
- Kefir grains

Fermentation Guidelines

Grain-to-milk ratio:

- 1 tsp grains can culture up to 4 cups milk
- Use more grains for faster fermentation (under 24 hours)

Temperature

- Room temperature is ideal
- In cooler environments, place jar in a warm spot, in a bowl of warm water, or on top of a fridge

Directions

1. Add grains: place 1 tsp–1 tbsp kefir grains into the quart jar.
2. Add milk: pour 1–4 cups of milk into the jar.
3. Ferment: Cover with breathable lid or cheesecloth. Let sit at room temperature for 12–24 hours. Check after 12–18 hours to avoid over-fermentation.
4. Check readiness: kefir is done when milk has thickened and shows clear separation into curds and whey.
5. Strain and store: remove grains (save for next batch), refrigerate strained kefir grains in new milk for short-term storage.
6. Refrigerate the kefir in fridge and consume within a week.

Tips and Notes

- Grains multiply over time; share extras or start a second batch.
- Shorter fermentation (12 hours) = milder flavor; longer (24 hours) = tangier kefir.
- Avoid ultra-pasteurized milk for the best results.

DECEMBER

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25 Christmas Day	26 Boxing Day
27	28	29	30	31		

HOW TO START FERMENTING

Fermenting at home is simple and rewarding.

Clean jar

Fresh ingredients

Salt

Time

Common Methods

Lactic acid fermentation

Used for veggies like pickles and sauerkraut

Yeast fermentation

Used in bread, kombucha and beer

Mould bases fermentation

Used in miso and tempeh

Safety Tips

1. Always use clean equipment
2. Avoid mould (except in mould-based recipes)
3. If it smells truly rotten, toss it!

IDEAS TO INCLUDE FERMENTED FOODS IN YOUR DIET

Breakfast:

- Add sauerkraut or kraut-chi to scrambled eggs
- Top avocado toast with fermented vegetables
- Mix fermented vegetables into a hash potato dish
- Stir kraut-chi into fried rice made with leftover rice

Lunch

- Use sauerkraut as a sandwich filling or topping
- Add fermented vegetables to grain bowls or salads
- Mix fermented onions or carrots into wraps and burritos
- Top soups with a dollop of kimchi or sauerkraut
- Use fermented vegetables in a salad or salad dressing

Dinner

- Serve fermented vegetables as a simple side dish
- Mix sauerkraut into mashed potatoes
- Add kraut-chi to stir-fries last minute of cooking
- Use as a topping for grilled meats, fish, or chicken

Snacks

- Eat fermented vegetables straight from the jar
- Add to a cheese board with olives and pickles
- Mix into hummus or yogurt-based dips
- Top baked sweets with fermented vegetables

2026
Calendar

Canadian Fermented Foods Initiative

Weston Family Foundation

LAWSON Research Institute
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