

## Your basic sauerkraut

### Ingredients

- One or more heads of cabbage
- Salt. We recommend non-iodized [sea salt](#)<sup>1</sup>. Any type of salt will work, but some say additives and processing can introduce elements that kill the good bacteria
- Optional: a high-tannin leaf, such as grape, oak, or horseradish. You'll top the kraut with them, which helps discourage unwanted bacteria, yeast, and mold. This might also help your ferment last longer, as the one time we forgot the leaf on top, the upper-most kraut wasn't as crunchy as the bottom after 6 months in our basement storage

### Equipment

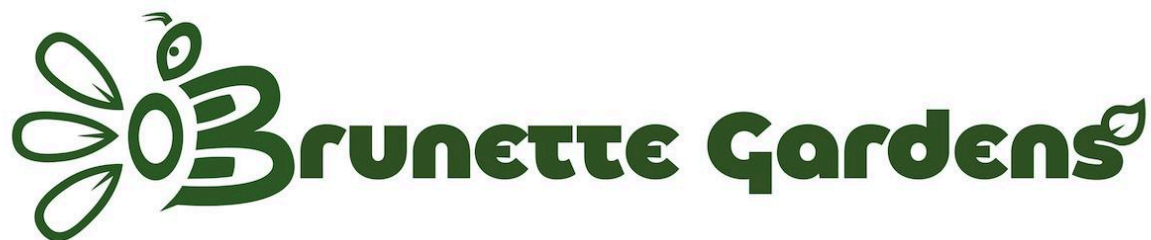
- A large bowl.
- Jars or a crock. Basically, you need something for the cabbage to sit in while it ferments. [Crocks](#) are great for large quantities of kraut, and they often come with ceramic weights to keep the cabbage below the brine. Once it's done fermenting in a crock, you can transfer it to mason jars or some other jars that will seal. We recommend if using jars that you save an old "skinny" jar from olives or sauce that fits right down into the top of a mason jar, sliding in with little room on the sides.
- Something to tamp down the cabbage in the jars. The [sauerkraut kit we love](#) comes with a handy wooden tamping dowel. But it would only take a bit of creativity to come up with a reasonable substitute. You can also use your own knuckle power!

### Steps

1. Core and shred the cabbage. First cut the cabbage in half and then cut the core out that sits at the bottom of the cabbage. Once that is done, cut the cabbage into thin strips.

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<sup>1</sup> This recipe contains affiliate links. If you purchase using the links, we might earn a small commission at no extra cost to you. This helps defray the cost of providing most of our Brunette Gardens content for free.



2. Put the cabbage in the bowl.
3. Add salt. Here is where it gets a bit intuitive. We've seen recommendations for everything from 10 cups of cabbage to one teaspoon of salt to 7 cups of cabbage to two teaspoons of salt. The first seems a bit light on the salt, and when you crush it, you might not get much brine. The second seems a bit salty to us. We usually go with about 8 cups (2 L) of cabbage to one teaspoon (5 ml) of salt.
4. Crush the cabbage. Most recipes say "massage" the cabbage, but that's a mis-leading term. What you are doing is grabbing fistfuls of cabbage, crushing it in your hands, and then dropping it back into the bowl and repeating this process. Once the cabbage has softened and you have a good bit of brine in the bowl with the cabbage, you're done.
5. Now put the cabbage into your jars(s) and/or your crock. You want to pack it down with your fists, knuckles, or tamping device until enough brine comes to the top of the jar/crock that the cabbage is submerged. Leave a good half inch of fluid on top of your cabbage and another half inch of empty space before the top of the jar. If you are using a crock, go for a full 1-2 inches (25-50 ml) in both cases.
6. Place the high-tannin leaves on top, if you're using them, tucking them under the brine. Then place the weights over those. Lid and add water to the crock if it's the water-seal kind. If you're using the fermentation kit, the soda glass goes on top of the leaves or top layer of kraut. Place the silicone burping nipple over that, with the mason-jar ring sealing it in place. If you're using a "skinny" jar, it goes on top of the leaves/top kraut layer, too. If the jar isn't heavy enough, you might have to fill it with water to weigh it down.
7. Place the jars/crock in a dark area that keeps a fairly even temperature. If it's on the warm side, the fermentation process might take only a few days. If it's cooler, it could take two weeks or even longer. We keep ours in a basement that ranges between 55 and 70 degrees F (13-21°C) depending on the time of year. Most often, it's about 65°, and we tend to go a week and a half.
8. Taste-test your sauerkraut. That is really the only way to know when it's done. We tend to jar our kraut for storage when it's just slightly less tangy than we want it, as it will ferment just a bit more once it's on the shelf. When the kraut is where you want it, transfer it from the crock to clean jars. Once again you want to press it down firmly, using your fists, knuckles, or a tamper. If you're using jars from the beginning, the process is simpler since you don't have to transfer the kraut, but make sure the lid and the top of the jar are clean before you seal it.