

Kvass – Super Easy Wellness Tonic

Beet kvass is an amazing liquid for digestion (and so much more). And beet kvass can literally be made in less than 10 minutes, minus the time it sits on your counter fermenting. From [Nourishing Traditions](#) we learn: “One 4-ounce glass, morning and night, is an excellent blood tonic, promotes regularity, aids digestion, alkalizes the blood, cleanses the liver and is a good treatment for kidney stones and other ailments.” And unlike medicine from the store – absolutely no harmful side effects.



An Internet search of the benefits of beets will keep you reading for days. [A search in PubMed](#) points out the benefits of lowering blood pressure (among other things) as well as [increasing exercise performance](#).

So we have this wondrous root vegetable which we then take and lacto-ferment. The [Weston A Price Foundation](#) is a wonderful [source for information on lacto-fermented foods](#) like beet kvass.

Every group of people Dr. Price studied consumed some fermented food in their diet. Through the ages they had paid attention to what happened to their foods when trying to store

them. They learned to harness the power of nature to preserve food naturally and in the process that food became more nutrient dense with enzymes and healthy bacteria.

Before the days of refrigeration and canning, food was preserved through a process called lacto-fermentation. Lactic acid is nature's best preservative – it inhibits putrefying bacteria. Starches and sugars in vegetables and fruits are converted into lactic acid by lactic-acid producing bacteria that are present on the surface of all plants and animals.

These **bacteria** synthesize nutrients that are essential to us, enable us to digest nutrients that we otherwise would not be able to digest, make nutrients bio-available to us, and work with our immune systems to protect us.

The nutritive elements in our food do us no good if our bodies cannot assimilate them. Food preparation and processing should make our foods easier to digest. Unfortunately, most food processing techniques, such as canning, preserving in sugar and chemicals, pasteurizing and irradiation, all make food much more difficult to digest. When we consistently eat foods that are difficult to digest, we compromise our vitality because the body is forced to use a great deal of energy breaking the food down. People who do take the care needed to prepare food in such a way to make it easier to digest report increased energy since the body does not have to work so hard at digestion. **Fermenting makes enzymes** – enzymes break down our food.

More and more we see probiotics (good bacteria) and enzymes in stores and on commercials. When we ferment, we get these substances naturally.

What do you need to make kvass?

2 large or 3 medium peeled raw organic beets – chopped in chunks about 1/2 to 1" (if you cut them smaller, you'll have too much liquid)

1 tablespoon of sea salt
1/4 cup [whey](#) – must not be powdered
A 2 quart canning jar
Clean filtered water

Here is all you do: Put the beets, whey and salt in the jar and fill it to about an inch from the top with filtered water. Stir well and cover with a cloth and rubber band (to keep out fruit flies). That was easy. Now leave the jar at room temperature for 48-96 hours then put it in the frig. You're done.

I have found that I personally like to do about 3 days when my house is around 70 degrees. In Nourishing Traditions, Sally says that once you've consumed most of your first batch, you can refill the container with filtered water, set it back on the counter for 2 days and have another slightly less strong batch. After that, your beets are pretty well spent, so just throw them in the compost pile and start over again.

Over the years, I've learned to add water to the jar each time (or every other time) to refill it, put it back in the frig and just keep doing that until it tastes weaker than you like. I've found I get a lot more use out of my beets when I do that.

I like to keep at least 2 batches "brewing" in the frig. Just like kombucha, the kvass continues to ferment at cool temperatures, but much more slowly than on the counter. I think it tastes best when it's been in the refrigerator for 3+ weeks.

To me, beet kvass is the simplest way to add the benefits of lacto-fermentation to our daily routine. Sauerkraut is also incredibly easy, it just takes a bit more time to prepare the cabbage.

Hopefully this will motivate you to give kvass a try. One more way for you to have **real food** for **real health** so you can be

real happy. Remember that **real food** is the new medicine (actually, it's always been).

Tips for Fabulous Ferments

*This post is dedicated to my local fermenting buds – **Fermenting the Lakeshore***

With the recent evidence from the [Human Microbiome Project](#) proving we are more bacterial than human, fermenting is coming back with a bang. When we home ferment, we add flavorful drinks and condiments to our meals and improve our digestion and subsequently our health (both mental and physical). A proper balance of good bacteria is imperative to weight loss and management. We can do it all for a mere fraction of what probiotics and enzymes cost in the store.

For those of you just joining the wave as well as more conditioned ferment peeps, here are a few helpful pointers for the best fermented creations...

Produce–

Raw, fresh picked, local and [organic](#) are the best bet for superb fermentation. Organic from the grocery store is my second choice. Remember that [pesticide residues](#) can inhibit the bacterial growth that is necessary for successful preservation.

Salt–

Please always use high-quality salts. The cheap white salt at the store has gone through processing using unhealthy means and is drained of its life giving minerals.

I recommend that newbies follow a recipe the first time as far

as the amount of salt to use. After that, adjust down or up a slight amount to taste. The amount you use will affect not only taste but texture.

Sugar–

Recipes (i.e. kombucha) generally call for just “sugar”. Because of our compromised food supply with regard to GMO’s and pesticide use, I prefer to stay vigilant and use organic cane sugar. Regular white sugar is from [genetically modified sugar beets](#) – bad news.

H2O –

Non-chlorinated water MUST be used; filtered water is a good choice. Remember that chlorine kills micro-organisms and thus can keep your food from fermenting. Try to wash in non-chlorinated water even if you have to run a sink full and let it sit for half an hour before rinsing your produce. I encourage people to get the water out of the reverse osmosis machines at the local co-op or grocery store. Or invest in an under the sink RO of your own.

Cutting/Chopping –

The “cook” can choose to chop, slice, grate, use a food processor or mandolin for taking the original produce and making into the size for fermenting. One exception is [beet kvass](#), where you don’t want the chunks too small.



Exposure to Air –

Keep fermenting fruits and veggies submerged under the liquid in the jar to prevent mold. If growth appears, scrape it off. When I have a fermenting creation with floaties (like cardamom pods in kvass), I gently shake or stir them to discourage mold from growing.

Time –

At room temperature (70-75), ferments without whey need about

one week to develop the acidity required for preservation. When whey is used, preservation takes about 2-4 days. Even after being put in the refrigerator, your creation can improve with time.

Temperature –

During the first phase of fermenting, it's best to keep your ferments at room temperature. This phase may be a couple days if you're using whey or another starter or a week or longer for wild ferments. I check the creation to see if it tastes good, then when it does, I put it in on the top (ferments only) shelf in my refrigerator. If I had a cold cellar, I would use that. Vegetables can be stored for many months this way.

Tagging –

I strongly encourage people to place a tag on each creation when it's made stating what it is (for the family member that finds it in a couple months and thinks its gone bad) and the date of creation. This just takes the guess work out of the process. Also, because of the profound impact our intentions have on [water](#), I like to place a note that says "Love and Gratitude" on all my creations.

Placement

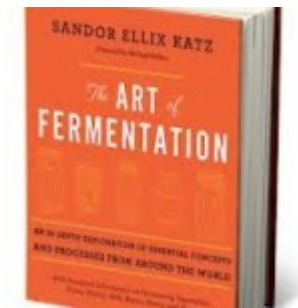
If you are making more than one type of ferment (i.e. like kombucha and kefir, or kefir and sauerkraut), place them in different parts of the kitchen/house so as to prevent cross contamination. I usually keep mine 10+ feet apart.

How much should I eat –

If you are new to fermenting and haven't been taking probiotics, please start out small. This means a single tablespoon of kraut or maybe a few ounces of kombucha* once or twice a day for a couple days. Let your body adjust. Ultimately you can work up to a couple tablespoons at each meal and/or 4 ounces of a fermented drink like kvass or kefir. Remember, fermented foods are meant to be condiments, not side dishes. Pay attention to how your body is responding.

And finally, a word about pH

Fermented creations have an acidic pH. Nature does that. Unless you are 1. going to go commercial or 2. just curious, you can trust Nature to be the pH it's supposed to be. There is no need to test your creation. The great thing about ferments is that they ultimately have an alkalizing effect on the body because they make minerals more accessible to our tissues. However, they go through the mouth in their acidic form, so after you consume them, rinse out your mouth with clean water or brush your teeth (sea salt and baking soda are effective, safe and inexpensive).



Looking for a book about this return to culture? My very favorite one on the subject is *The Art of Fermentation*, by Sandor (Kraut) Katz.

Happy Fermenting! Wishing you **real food** for **real health** so you can be **real happy!**