

Cultured Vegetables: Benefits & Recipes

http://www.naturesbestnews.com/article.php?article_id=8

Cultured Vegetables (CV) are considered a super food that contributes immensely to the healing and building your inner ecosystem. These nutrient-dense fermented foods have been around for thousands of years and can be found in every long living society. Cultured vegetables are "sauerkraut" (sauer = sour and kraut = greens or plants), not to be confused with the salted, pasteurized variety of sauerkraut sold in supermarkets.

They taste tangy. It may be a new taste for you, but you will soon feel that no meal is complete without them. Even better, since they are all-vegetable, they combine with either a protein or a starch meal.

They are made by shredding cabbage or a combination of cabbage and other vegetables and then packing them into an airtight container. They are left to ferment naturally at room temperature for several days or longer. Friendly bacteria naturally present in the vegetables quickly lower the pH, making a more acidic environment so the bacteria can reproduce. The vegetables become soft, delicious and somewhat "pickled."

BENEFITS OF CULTURED VEGETABLES

Rich in Lactobacilli

Cultured Vegetables help reestablish a healthy inner ecosystem. The friendly bacteria in raw, cultured vegetables are less expensive alternative to probiotics (although we recommend both initially when in the healing process.)

Digestive Aid

The enzymes in the CV also help digest other foods eaten with them. They improve digestion because they are "pre-digested" which means that the friendly bacteria has converted the natural sugars and starches in the vegetables into lactic acid before they even reach your mouth, a job your saliva and digestive enzymes would do anyway.

Alkaline forming and very cleansing

CV balance a toxic, acidic condition. They will also trigger cleansing. You may have an increase in intestinal gas initially as the vegetables stir up waste and toxins in the intestinal tract. Soon, however, you will notice an improvement in your stools. To ease the discomfort of the gas, colonics and enemas are very useful during this period.

Excellent source of vitamin C

Dutch Seaman used to carry them to prevent scurvy. Ideal for pregnant and nursing women. CV alleviate morning sickness during the early part of the pregnancy. Once the baby is born, the mother should continue eating the vegetables and drinking the juice. And the liquid from the juice can be fed to the baby in tiny spoonfuls relieve colic.

Appetite control and weight loss

CV are ideal for those with wanting to reduce their sugar cravings. The veggies help take away cravings for the sweet taste in pastries, colas, bread, pasta, dairy, and fruit.

Increased Longevity

You could think of the friendly bacteria in the raw CV as little powerhouses. By eating the vegetables, you will maintain your own enzyme reserve and use it to eliminate toxins, rejuvenate your cells, and strengthen your immune system, which all add up to a longer, healthier life.

BODY ECOLOGY DIET

written by Donna Gates

Cultured vegetables and their beneficial microflora demonstrate the potential to:

- Help combat and control cravings
- Increase energy levels
- Cleanse colon and aid in overcoming constipation
- Reverse acidic conditions by alkalinizing the body
- Fight off unfriendly microbes found in our food, water, and environment
- Correct hormone imbalances
- Stimulate metabolism
- Work against the development of fatty tissues
- Protect stomach and intestinal lining
- Normalize acidity of stomach
- Manufacture B vitamins
- Aid in assimilation of iron
- Supply digestive enzymes, thereby allowing the body's enzymes to be reserved for eliminating toxins, rejuvenating cells, and strengthening the immune system
- Benefit diabetics, as the microflora break down and digest the sugars in the vegetables
- Prevent and eliminate colic when eaten by nursing mothers or when the juice is given to babies in tiny spoonfuls
- Assist in the treatment of peptic ulcers, ulcerative colitis, colic, food allergies, cystitis, vaginal infections, and stomach aches

In the book, *Healing with Whole Foods*, Paul Pitchford discusses the benefits of cultured cabbage including: the regeneration of intestines, balancing of stomach secretions, strengthening of the pancreas, improved digestion of fats, strengthening of nerves, stimulation of blood formation, potential clearing of mental depression, and maximization of B12 uptake in the digestive tract.

It also contains large quantities of choline, a substance capable of lowering blood pressure, regulating the passage of nutrients into the blood, and preventing accumulation of fats in the liver. It also contains acetylcholine which affects the parasympathetic nervous system, thereby slowing the heart rate and promoting calmness and sleep, and positively affecting the peristaltic movements of the colon which aid in the relief of constipation.

MAKING CULTURED VEGETABLES

Cabbage is usually the main ingredient but adding other vegetables will increase the nutritional value and give you a variety of flavors.

VEGETABLES

- Green & Red Cabbage
- Cucumbers
- Carrots
- Beets
- Tomatoes
- Asparagus
- Green beans
- Greens: Spinach/Kale/Collards
- Onions
- Sweet potatoes
- Red/Daikon radishes
- Jicama
- Peppers
- Ocean Vegetables
- Dulse
- Wakame
- Hijiki
- Arame

HERBS AND SPICES

- Dill
- Caraway
- Curry
- Cilantro
- Garlic
- Chives
- Ginger root
- Mustard seeds
- Peppercorns
- Cloves
- Nutmeg
- Cinnamon
- Fennel

CULTURED VEGETABLES "The Probiotic Salad"

Cultured vegetables are made by shredding cabbage or a combination of cabbage and other vegetables and then packing them tightly into an airtight container. They are left to ferment at room temperature for several days or longer. Friendly bacteria naturally present in the vegetables quickly lower the pH, making a more acidic environment so the bacteria can reproduce. The vegetables become soft, delicious, and somewhat "pickled." One important secret to making really delicious yet medicinal cultured veggies is to use freshly harvested, organic, well-cleaned vegetables. After washing the veggies, spin them dry.

FAVORITE BEGINNERS RECIPES

Version 1 Oceanic Dill

3 heads green cabbage, shredded in a food processor
1 bunch kale, chopped by hand
(optional): 2 cups wakame ocean vegetables (measured after soaking), drained, spine removed, and chopped
1 Tbsp. dill seed

Version 2 Carrot Ginger Jazz

3 heads green cabbage, shredded in a food processor
6 carrots, large, shredded in a food processor
3 inch piece ginger, peeled and chopped
6 cloves garlic, peeled and chopped

Version 3 Green Apple Tang

Kohlrabi
Celery
Garlic
Ginger
One green apple

Version 4 Flamingo Beat

3 heads green cabbage
1 small beet
4 carrots

Version 5 Laurie's

I usually put all of this in, but when it says optional it is optional!
This recipe makes a double batch (12-14 jars)

3-5 med - large heads red cabbage
1 bunch swiss chard
2 lb organic carrots
1 bunch kale
1 bunch green onions
1 bunch dill (fresh), fennel or basil
2 bags (2 hearts each) organic Celery hearts or 2 stalks organic celery
2 red bell peppers
2 zucchini (optional)
2 cucumbers (optional)
1/2 bag Arame (optional : I don't always use this)
1 bunch Arugula (optional)

Version 6 Sweet & Savory

2 heads red cabbage
3 carrot
1 beet
1 sweet potato
1 red bell pepper
1 red onion
3 garlic cloves
Dulse

Version 7 Spicy Cabbage

2 heads green cabbage
1 bunch kale
1 daikon radish
5 scallions
1-3 jalapeno peppers (or other hot peppers)

TO MAKE CULTURED VEGETABLES Ditoh's Recipe

Dissolve one package of Body Ecology Culture Starter (<https://shop.bodyecology.com/prodinfo.asp?number=BE011>) in 1/2 cup warm (90*) water.*

You can also use an acidophilus tablet to start yours. When it's time to make a new batch, use some of the previous batch of cultured vegetables as the starter.

Add some form of sugar to feed the starter (honey, Agave, or EcoBLOOM). Let starter/sugar mixture sit for about 20 minutes or longer while the L. Plantarum and other bacteria wake up and begin enjoying the sugar.

While the starter is waking up and activating prepare other ingredients.

Combine all ingredients in a large bowl.

Remove 2-3 cups of this mixture and put into a blender.

Add enough filtered water to make "brine" the consistency of a thick juice (about 4 cups including the veggies)

Add the starter culture to the brine.

Blend well and then add brine back into the vegetable mixture.

Stir well.

You can also add the smaller ingredients like garlic and ginger or dill to blender mixture for more even distribution when mixing.

Pack mixture down into a 2 quart or 1 quart glass or stainless steel containers.

Use your fist, a wooden dowel, or a potato masher to pack veggies tightly.

Fill container almost full, but leave about an inch of room at the top for veggies to expand.

Roll up several cabbage leaves into a tight "log" and place them on top to fill the remaining 3/4 - 2 inch space. Clamp jar closed.

Let veggies sit at about a 70 degree room temperature for at least three days. A week is even better. It is a good idea to place jars of veggies on a tray just in case there is any overflow as they ferment. Refrigerate to slow down fermentation. Enjoy!

IMPORTANT

During the fermentation period, the friendly bacteria are having a heyday, reproducing and converting sugars and starches to lactic acid. Once the initial process is over, you can slow down the bacterial activity by putting the cultured veggies in the refrigerator. The cold greatly slows the fermentation, but does not stop it completely. Even if the veggies sit in your refrigerator for months, they will not spoil; instead they become more delicious with time. Properly made, cultured vegetables have at least an eight month shelf life. If you don't have room in the refrigerator, you can leave them on a shelf for several months, putting them in the refrigerator after opening.