



THE ULTIMATE GUIDE FOR
FERMENTED
FOODS



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Table of Contents

1. WHAT ARE FERMENTED FOODS
2. POPULAR FERMENTED FOODS AND DRINKS
3. UNSWEETENED COCONUT KEFIR
4. UNSWEETENED COCONUT YOGHURT
5. PLAIN DAIRY KEFIR
6. PLAIN GREEK YOGHURT
7. KIMCHI
8. SAUERKRAUT
9. PICKLES - FERMENTED CUCUMBERS
10. MISO
11. TEMPEH
12. TOFU
13. KOMBUCHA
14. APPLE CIDER VINEGAR
15. RECIPES





The Power of Fermented Foods - Boost Gut Health, Immunity & More

Incorporating fermented foods into your daily routine offers a powerful health advantage: a natural infusion of probiotics that nourish your gut microbiome — leading to improved digestion, enhanced immunity, and greater overall wellbeing.

Why Add Fermented Foods to Your Diet ?

Fermented foods support:

- Better digestion
- Stronger immune function
- Improved blood sugar control
- Reduced inflammation
- Lower risk of heart disease
- Weight management

They also bring a unique depth of flavour to your meals — meaning you can nourish your gut while delighting your taste buds.

Go Slow: Start Small & Build Up

To avoid digestive discomfort like bloating or gas, start with small amounts — for example:

1 tablespoon of sauerkraut or sauerkraut juice per day and gradually increase as your gut flora adapts.

What Is Fermentation?

Fermentation is a natural process where bacteria and yeast convert sugars into beneficial acids or alcohol.

This not only preserves the food, but also enriches it with living probiotics essential for gut and immune health.

Pro Tip for Sensitive Guts:

If you're dealing with issues like SIBO, histamine intolerance, or IBS, speak to a practitioner before adding fermented foods — not all ferments suit every gut.

Popular Fermented Foods & Drinks

Here are popular fermented foods and drinks that have been shown to help improve health and digestion...

- Coconut Kefir
- Unsweetened Coconut Yoghurt
- Dairy Kefir
- Plain Greek Yoghurt
- Kimchi
- Sauerkraut
- Pickles - Fermented Cucumbers
- Miso
- Tempeh
- Tofu
- Kombucha
- Apple Cider Vinegar

Currently, there are no set rules on the frequency of consuming fermented foods, but incorporating a few servings into your daily routine could offer health advantages.

Begin with one or two small servings daily and gradually increase from there.

Obtaining beneficial bacteria through whole, fermented foods is not only an effective but also a cost-efficient way to support your gut health.

This natural approach allows you to manage your intake more gently, helping to minimize potential side effects like bloating and gas that can occur with sudden or excessive probiotic supplementation.



Unsweetened Coconut *Kefir*

Coconut kefir is a fermented drink that includes probiotics, beneficial bacteria that aid in maintaining and nourishing the gut microbiome.

These beneficial bacteria can assist in improving digestion; however, if fermented foods are unfamiliar to you, it's best to introduce them gradually.

Benefits

These probiotics can help balance the gut microbiome, potentially reducing symptoms of digestive issues like bloating and constipation. Moreover, coconut kefir is dairy-free, making it an excellent alternative for those with lactose intolerance or dairy sensitivities.

It also contains vitamins and minerals inherent to coconut water, such as potassium, which is vital for heart health and maintaining proper fluid balance in the body.

Unsweetened Coconut Yoghurt

Coconut yoghurt is commonly crafted from fermented coconut milk, offering a perfect fermented food choice for individuals adhering to a vegan diet or facing dairy intolerance.

It is free from lactose and casein, naturally creamy and sweet, and can be store-bought or made at home.

When purchasing, choose unsweetened options from the store.

Benefits

Coconut yoghurt is a source of probiotics, which are live active cultures that promote the growth of beneficial gut bacteria.

Probiotics not only help with digestion but also help reduce inflammation and strengthen the immune system



Plain *Dairy Kefir*

Dairy kefir, a drinkable form of yogurt, is created by fermenting milk with kefir grains, marking its prominence in the realm of fermented foods.

It stands out for its ability to harbor a wide array of microorganisms, making it a preferred choice for a probiotic source over other dairy ferments like yogurt. The diverse microbial community in kefir, including beneficial strains like *Lactobacillus kefir*, plays a crucial role in safeguarding the intestinal flora from pathogenic bacteria, thus promoting a healthy gut ecosystem. Kefir not only mitigates common digestive discomforts such as bloating and constipation but also offers benefits for more serious digestive ailments.

Thanks to the fermentation process, kefir is low in lactose, offering a digestible alternative for individuals with lactose intolerance.

Research also points to kefir's capabilities in boosting immune function and its potential anti-cancer benefits. Additionally, it's a rich source of calcium and vitamin K2, essential nutrients for maintaining strong and healthy bones.



Select your kefir carefully, as store-bought kefirs, especially flavored ones, often contain added sugars.

Opt for plain varieties and try to ease into it: Introducing kefir gradually can prevent initial digestive discomfort. Start with small amounts to transition smoothly.



Plain *Greek* Yoghurt

Greek yogurt stands out as a highly nutritious dairy product, celebrated for its impressive protein levels and a rich array of vital nutrients, including vitamin B12, riboflavin (B2), calcium, and selenium.

It often contains more protein and less sugar than standard yogurt, positioning it as a preferred option in various diets.

Benefits

Greek yogurt is a gut-loving powerhouse, rich in probiotics—the beneficial bacteria that support a healthy microbiome and improved digestion. Regularly adding it to your meals can help diversify your gut flora, supporting immune function and nutrient absorption.

Pro tip: Skip the sugary flavoured varieties. Choose plain Greek yogurt with the label “Live & Active Cultures” to ensure you're getting the maximum probiotic benefits.

Kimchi

Kimchi, a traditional Korean dish, is renowned for its probiotic qualities, made from fermented vegetables like cabbage and radishes seasoned with garlic, ginger, and chili peppers.

This fermentation process creates a unique flavour profile that's spicy, sour, and tangy. While it's celebrated for its bold taste, milder versions exist for those less inclined towards heat.

Rich in fiber, vitamins (such as vitamin C and B-complex), and minerals (including iron, potassium, and calcium), kimchi supports gut health through its probiotic and prebiotic content, and offers anti-inflammatory and weight management benefits.

However, its spiciness might not suit everyone, potentially causing acid reflux or bloating due to its fermentation and cabbage content. Additionally, its high sodium levels necessitate mindful consumption to avoid excessive salt intake.



Sauerkraut

The raw, unpasteurised kind is a true powerhouse for gut health.

It's rich in probiotics that support your immune system, balance blood sugar, and aid digestion.

While many probiotic supplements offer between 1–50 billion CFUs per dose, just 1 gram of sauerkraut can contain 1,000 to 100 million CFUs — plus a greater variety of beneficial strains.

That diversity makes sauerkraut one of the simplest (and tastiest!) ways to boost your microbiome naturally

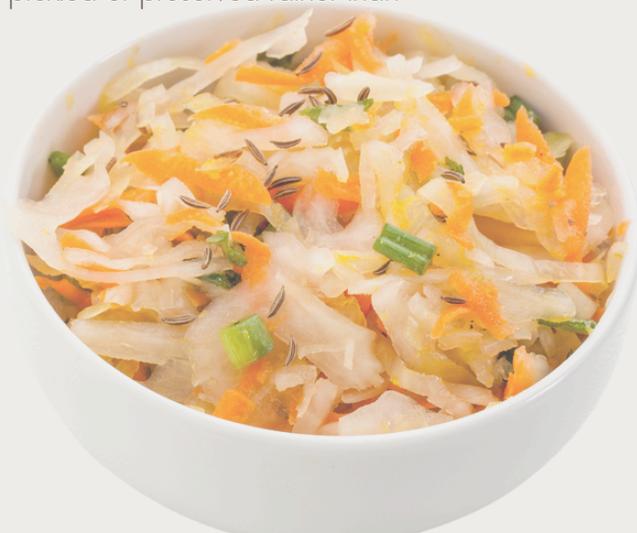
Beyond its gut health perks, sauerkraut is a potent source of vitamin C and iron, essential for a robust immune function.

For those trying sauerkraut for the first time, a gradual introduction with a daily tablespoon can acclimate your gut flora while minimizing potential discomforts like gas or bloating.

When shopping for sauerkraut, it's crucial to choose a product that's been traditionally fermented and is rich in probiotics.

Opt for raw, unpasteurized sauerkraut found in the refrigerated section of your grocery store, avoiding shelf-stable versions. An authentic sauerkraut will list only basic ingredients such as cabbage, salt, and water. Some varieties may include additional natural ingredients like carrots, garlic, and spices (cumin, ginger) for extra flavour and health benefits.

However, avoid sauerkraut with vinegar, sugar, or preservatives like sodium benzoate on the label, as these ingredients suggest the cabbage has been pickled or preserved rather than fermented, missing out on the probiotic advantage.



Pickles (Fermented Cucumbers) — The Polish Way to Gut Health



In Polish tradition, fermented cucumbers (ogórki kiszzone) are more than just a tangy side dish—they're a powerful natural probiotic.

Health Benefits:

- Rich in probiotics
- Traditional lacto-fermentation encourages the growth of beneficial bacteria, supporting gut flora and improving digestion.
- Immune system support
- A healthy gut is directly linked to a stronger immune response—fermented foods help maintain that balance.
- Natural source of enzymes
- Aids in the breakdown and absorption of nutrients, reducing bloating and improving overall digestive function.
- Blood sugar balance
- Some studies suggest fermented vegetables may help stabilize glucose levels and reduce insulin spikes.
- Anti-inflammatory properties
- The fermentation process may increase bioavailability of antioxidants, helping to combat inflammation in the body.

Traditional Polish Tips:

- Made simply with salt, garlic, dill, horseradish root, and fresh cucumbers.
- No vinegar—just time, patience, and natural fermentation.
- Store in a cool, dark place and refrigerate after opening.

How to Enjoy:

- As a digestive side dish with meals
- Chopped into salads or added to sandwiches
- Drink the brine (sok z ogórków kiszonych) to help with hangovers or stomach upset



Miso

Miso, crafted from fermented soybeans, stands as a robust source of complete protein, brimming with essential nutrients and probiotics that promote gut health.

This fermented paste is a staple in Asian cuisine and has found a growing fan base in the West thanks to its nutritional benefits and versatility.

Miso comes in a spectrum of colours, each indicating its flavour intensity; the darker the miso, the richer and more savoury its taste.

How to Use Miso

Miso's culinary applications extend far beyond soup. It's a fantastic ingredient for enhancing broths, marinades, and casseroles, or as a foundation for dips, spreads, and salad dressings.

Mixing miso into cold dishes is particularly beneficial, as high temperatures can diminish its probiotic benefits. To preserve these, incorporate miso into hot meals after they've been taken off the heat.

It's advisable to first blend miso with a bit of warm water, ensuring it distributes evenly without forming lumps.

Tempeh

Tempeh, a fermented soybean product, has emerged as a favourite source of plant-based protein, offering a wide array of uses in various recipes, from stir-fries to sandwiches.

Its probiotic content is among tempeh's key health benefits, introducing beneficial bacteria that enhance gut health. Additionally, tempeh contains prebiotics, dietary fibers that nourish these good bacteria. Packed with soy protein, tempeh helps in curbing hunger effectively.

The soy isoflavones present in tempeh boast antioxidant properties that help fight oxidative stress and may aid in cholesterol management. With a significant calcium content, tempeh also supports bone health.



Beyond being a mere meat substitute, tempeh's rich nutritional value, coupled with its probiotic and prebiotic advantages, positions it as an exceptional choice for anyone aiming to enrich their diet.

For the best quality, opt for organic tempeh whenever possible.

Tofu

Tofu is made by coagulating soy milk and pressing the curds into blocks of varying firmness. It's packed with nutrients and high-quality protein, containing all the essential amino acids your body needs.

GMO...

When it comes to tofu, it's worth noting that many types are produced using genetically modified (GMO) soybeans. Choosing organic tofu can be a smart move.

Tofu also contains substances known as anti-nutrients, such as phytates, which may interfere with the body's ability to absorb certain minerals. Yet, pre-treatment processes like soaking, sprouting, or fermenting the soybeans used in tofu can greatly diminish these antinutrients.

Furthermore, tofu is a significant source of isoflavones, beneficial plant compounds that have a mild estrogen-like effect in the body. Research has linked these isoflavones to several health advantages, including lowered risks of diseases such as cancer, diabetes, and heart conditions.

CONCERNS

Despite some concerns about the isoflavones in tofu and their potential impact on cancer risk, particularly among postmenopausal women, a detailed 2015 review by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) concluded that there is no increased risk of breast cancer or other cancers associated with tofu consumption.



Kombucha

Kombucha is a fermented tea rich in probiotics, the beneficial bacteria that aid in promoting a healthy gut and improving digestive function.

This beverage is also packed with antioxidants and is favored for its refreshing effervescence and health-boosting properties.

Benefits

Kombucha is celebrated for its antimicrobial properties due to acetic acid production during fermentation, enhancing gut health with its probiotic content and offering antioxidant support to combat oxidative stress.

Considerations

Kombucha usually contains a small amount of alcohol, typically less than 0.5%, although this varies by brand. It also has residual sugars, intended as nourishment for fermenting gut bacteria. If you're monitoring your sugar intake or have alcohol sensitivity, it's prudent to consume kombucha with caution.



Apple Cider Vinegar

Apple cider vinegar (ACV) is highly regarded for its health benefits, backed by research highlighting its antimicrobial and antioxidant capabilities.

Produced by fermenting apple sugars into acetic acid, this key component of ACV is believed to offer significant health advantages, including the potential to eliminate or inhibit harmful bacteria. This process not only imparts ACV with its characteristic sharp flavor but also aligns it with properties beneficial for bodily health.

Moreover, ACV has been recognized for its ability to improve insulin sensitivity and lower blood sugar levels post-meal, making it a valuable addition for those monitoring their metabolic health.



However, caution is advised when consuming ACV due to its strong acidity, which can harm tooth enamel and the esophagus if not diluted properly in water.

Before incorporating ACV into your daily health regimen, it's wise to consult healthcare professionals to ensure it's suitable for your individual health needs, balancing its benefits with mindful usage.

RECIPES



Tempeh

Ingredients:

- 1 block tempeh
- 2 tablespoons coconut aminos
- 1 tablespoon maple syrup or honey
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 1 teaspoon ginger
- 1 teaspoon sesame seeds
- Avocado oil for frying

Marinade Instructions:

1. Cut the tempeh into thin strips or cubes, depending on your preference.
2. In a bowl, combine coconut aminos, maple syrup (or honey), minced garlic, and grated ginger. Add the tempeh pieces and toss to coat. Let marinate for at least 15 minutes, or up to an hour for more flavour.

Frying Instructions:

1. Heat a good amount of oil in a frying pan over medium-high heat.
2. Remove the tempeh from the marinade (reserve the marinade) and fry in the hot oil. Cook until golden brown and crispy on all sides, about 2-3 minutes per side.
3. Once all the tempeh is fried, pour the remaining marinade into the pan and heat until it thickens into a glaze. Return the tempeh to the pan and toss to coat evenly. Sprinkle with sesame seeds.
4. Serve the crispy fried tempeh hot as a main dish or a protein-packed snack. It goes great with rice and steamed vegetables or as part of a larger meal.



Tofu

Ingredients:

- 1 block of firm or extra-firm tofu
- 2 tablespoons coconut aminos
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon paprika (optional for extra flavour)
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Avocado oil for frying

Instructions:

1. Drain the tofu and wrap it in a clean kitchen towel or paper towels. Place a heavy object on top (like a skillet or a can) to press out excess moisture for about 15-30 minutes.
2. Cut the tofu into cubes or slices, depending on your preference.
3. Season: In a bowl, gently toss the tofu with coconut aminos, then sprinkle with garlic powder, paprika, salt, and pepper until evenly coated.
4. Heat a generous amount of oil in a pan over medium-high heat. Once hot, add the tofu pieces in a single layer, making sure not to overcrowd the pan. Fry until golden brown and crispy on all sides, about 2-3 minutes per side.
5. Transfer the fried tofu to a paper towel-lined plate to drain any excess oil.
6. Enjoy your crispy fried tofu hot, as a snack with your favourite dipping sauce, or add it to salads, stir-fries, or noodle dishes.



Miso Soup

Ingredients:

- 4 cups water
- 2-3 tablespoons miso paste (to taste)
- 1 block tofu, cubed
- Seaweed (optional)
- Green onions, chopped (for garnish)

Instructions:

1. Bring water to a simmer in a pot. Reduce heat to low.
2. Place miso paste in a small bowl, add a little hot water and whisk until smooth. Then, add it to the pot of simmering water.
3. Add tofu cubes and seaweed to the pot and warm through, being careful not to boil.
4. Garnish with green onions and sesame seeds before serving.



Traditional *Polish* Sauerkraut

Ingredients:

- 1 medium white cabbage
- 1 tablespoon non-iodised salt (sea salt or pickling salt)
- 1 teaspoon caraway seeds or juniper berries (optional but traditional)
- 1–2 bay leaves
- A few black peppercorns (optional)

Instructions:

1. Sterilise your jar with boiling water and allow to cool.
2. Remove outer leaves of the cabbage, set one aside for later. Cut the cabbage in half, remove the core, and finely shred the rest using a knife or mandolin.
3. In a large bowl, combine the shredded cabbage with salt.
4. Massage the cabbage vigorously for 5–10 minutes, until it softens and starts releasing brine (natural liquid from the cabbage).
5. Add caraway seeds, bay leaves, and pepper if using.
6. Tightly pack the cabbage into your jar, pressing down with a wooden spoon or fist to remove air pockets and bring brine to the top.
7. Cover with the reserved outer cabbage leaf and place a fermentation weight or clean rock on top to keep contents submerged.
8. Cover jar with a lid loosely (or cloth and rubber band) — do not seal airtight.
9. Let sit at room temperature (18–22°C) for 5 to 10 days.
 - Check daily: press cabbage down if it rises and ensure it's covered in brine.
 - Skim off any white film (kahm yeast) — it's harmless.
10. Taste after 5 days. When desired tang is reached, seal tightly and refrigerate.

Serving Ideas:

Flavour matures over time.

- As a side with polish dumplings, stews, or roasts
- Stir-fried with onions and caraway
- Mixed into salads for gut-friendly crunch



Traditional Pickles (*Polish Fermented Cucumbers*)

Ingredients:

- 6–8 small pickling cucumbers (must be firm and fresh)
- 1–2 cloves garlic, peeled
- 2–3 sprigs fresh dill (with flower heads, if possible)
- 1 small piece of horseradish root (optional, adds crispness)
- 3–4 black peppercorns
- 1 bay leaf
- Filtered water (do not use chlorinated tap water)
- Salt: 1 heaped tablespoon non-iodised salt (e.g. sea salt or pickling salt) per 1 litre of water

Instructions:

1. Sterilise your jar with boiling water and let it cool.
2. Wash cucumbers thoroughly and trim 1–2 mm off the blossom ends (this prevents softening).
3. In the bottom of the jar, layer garlic, dill, horseradish, peppercorns, and bay leaf.
4. Pack cucumbers tightly into the jar, standing upright if possible.
5. Dissolve salt in filtered water and pour over cucumbers, covering them completely.
6. Cover loosely with a lid or cloth. Do not seal airtight during fermentation.
7. Leave at room temperature (18–22°C) for 5–7 days. Taste daily.
 - Bubbles = fermentation is active!
8. Once sourness is to your liking, seal the jar, and store in the fridge.

Tips:

- Flavour deepens over time.
- If a bit of white film (kahm yeast) appears, skim it off — it's harmless.



Kefir

Ingredients:

- 2 tablespoons kefir grains
- 2 cups milk (preferably whole milk for thicker kefir)

Instructions:

1. Place kefir grains in a glass jar. Add milk, leaving about an inch of space at the top.
2. Cover the jar with a breathable material, like a paper towel or cloth, secured with a rubber band. Let it ferment at room temperature (20-29°C) for 24 hours.
3. Gently strain the mixture to separate the kefir from the grains. Use the kefir grains for your next batch.



Kimchi

Ingredients:

- 1 large napa cabbage, chopped into bite-sized pieces
- 1/4 cup sea salt
- Water, enough to cover cabbage in a bowl

For the Paste:

- 1 tablespoon grated ginger
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 2-3 tablespoons fish sauce (or soy sauce for a vegan version)
- 5 tablespoons Korean red pepper flakes (gochugaru)
- Optional: 1 tablespoon salted shrimp, 1/2 cup grated Korean pear
- 4 green onions, chopped into 1-inch pieces
- 1 medium daikon radish, peeled and julienned

Instructions:

1. Toss cabbage with sea salt in a bowl. Cover with water and let sit 1-2 hours. Rinse three times and let drain for 15-20 minutes..
2. In a bowl, mix ginger, garlic, sugar, fish sauce, (shrimp and pear if using). Add green onions and daikon. Mix well and stir in the Korean red pepper flakes until a consistent paste forms.
3. Using gloves mix drained cabbage with paste until evenly coated.
4. Pack kimchi into a jar, letting the brine cover the vegetables. Let it ferment at room temperature for 1-5 days, opening daily to release gases. Press down the vegetables to keep them submerged under the brine.
5. Chill in the fridge after desired level of fermentation. It's ready to eat but improves over time.

