

5 ESSENTIAL STEPS TO



CANNING

FERMENTING AND HOME
PRESERVATION

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Molly Bravo

Molly Bravo is the founder and creative spirit behind Wylder Space, a community and movement dedicated to reclaiming the art of traditional food preparation and intentional living. As a chef, educator, and passionate advocate for the Real Food Movement, Molly has spent nearly two decades empowering families to reconnect with their kitchens, their health, and their roots.

Growing up with a deep appreciation for wholesome, homemade meals, Molly witnessed firsthand the joy and connection that food can bring to a family. Over the years, she turned this passion into a career, working as a private chef and caterer, creating dishes that celebrate local, seasonal ingredients. It wasn't until she discovered the timeless practices of fermenting, canning, and food preservation that her mission truly took shape.

Through Wylder Space, Molly is passionate about helping individuals and families reclaim their food freedom, teaching them how to slow down, simplify, and savor the process of creating a more intentional experience centered around home cooked meals. Her unique approach blends step-by-step education coupled with encouragement, making even the most intimidating techniques accessible.

Whether personally or professionally, her goal remains the same: to inspire others to embrace a lifestyle rooted in health, sustainability, and tradition. When she's not in the kitchen, Molly is busy designing her life exactly as she imagines it to be- in her own words it's her "living breathing art project." Join Molly and the Wylder Space community to rediscover the magic of real food and intentional living. Food is, and always will be, a medium for connection.

DEAR SEEKER OF REAL FOOD

LET ME GUESS - YOU'RE TIRED.

TIRED OF PROCESSED FOODS THAT DON'T REALLY NOURISH.

TIRED OF WONDERING WHAT'S ACTUALLY IN THAT PACKAGE YOU JUST BOUGHT.

TIRED OF FEELING DISCONNECTED FROM THE FOOD THAT SUSTAINS YOU AND YOUR FAMILY.

I GET IT.

SIX YEARS AGO, I WAS A CHEF LIVING ON COFFEE AND CONVENIENCE FOODS, RUSHING THROUGH LIFE WITHOUT ANY REAL CONNECTION TO WHAT I WAS PUTTING IN MY BODY.

GETTING SOBER CHANGED EVERYTHING - IT CLEARED THE FOG ENOUGH FOR ME TO SEE THAT THE WAY WE FEED OURSELVES MATTERS. REALLY MATTERS.

That awakening led me down a path I never expected. From studying my grandmother Alberta's Depression-era recipe cards to learning traditional food ways from Native American elders, I've discovered something profound: the wisdom of our ancestors isn't outdated - it's exactly what we need right now.

This guide is about reclaiming something we've lost - the deep satisfaction of working with our hands, the joy of preserving nature's abundance, the pride of feeding our families food we understand.

In these pages, I'll share the five essential steps that transformed my kitchen from a place of quick convenience to a sanctuary of traditional wisdom. You aren't going to find complicated chef techniques - they're the simple, practical methods our grandparents used to keep their families healthy and well-fed, adapted for our modern lives.

Whether you've never fermented a vegetable or you're already experimenting with raw dairy, consider this your invitation to join a growing community of people who are choosing to step away from industrial food and back into relationship with real, nourishing traditions.

Ready to begin? Let's do it :)

In Gratitude,

Molly Bravo

PS: You know that feeling that there must be a better way? That pull toward something more authentic? Trust it. It's your ancestors whispering through your bones, calling you, to remember....

CHAPTER I: DECLUTTER AND REVAMP YOUR KITCHEN

IN TODAY'S BUSY WORLD, THE KITCHEN OFTEN BECOMES A CATCH-ALL SPACE FOR CLUTTER.

YET, A FUNCTIONAL KITCHEN IS THE CORNERSTONE OF A NOURISHING HOME.

BY CREATING AN INTENTIONAL, STREAMLINED SPACE, YOU CAN RECLAIM YOUR KITCHEN AS A HUB FOR HEALTH AND CONNECTION.

THIS CHAPTER WILL GUIDE YOU THROUGH ORGANIZING YOUR TOOLS, REMOVING UNNECESSARY GADGETS, AND BUILDING A SPACE THAT INSPIRES TRADITIONAL FOOD PREPARATION.

Traditional food preparation requires a few specialized tools, but these can easily coexist with modern kitchen essentials.

Follow these tips to make your kitchen work for you:

Step 1: Assess Your Tools

Gather all your cooking tools in one space.

Sort them into categories: Essential, Seasonal, and Seldom Used.

Step 2: Prioritize Essentials For traditional food preparation, prioritize tools like:

Canning Supplies: Mason jars, lids, a canning funnel, and a water bath canner.

Fermentation Tools: Crocks, fermentation weights, and airlock lids.

Raw Dairy Equipment: Cheesecloth, thermometers, and jars for storing yogurt or kefir.

General Tools: Sharp knives, wooden spoons, cutting boards, and stainless steel mixing bowls.

Step 3: Designate Zones Organize your kitchen into functional zones:

Preservation Zone: Store canning tools and jars together in a cabinet or pantry section.

Fermentation Station: Dedicate a shelf or countertop space for ongoing fermentation projects.

Prep Area: Keep frequently used tools like knives, cutting boards, and mixing bowls easily accessible.

Step 4: Label and Stack

Use stackable bins or labeled baskets for smaller items like lids and fermentation weights.

Store jars with similar sizes together to save space

DECLUTTERING TIPS: REMOVING GADGETS

THE MODERN KITCHEN IS OFTEN OVERRUN WITH SINGLE-USE GADGETS AND TRENDY APPLIANCES. DECLUTTERING CREATES SPACE FOR MEANINGFUL TOOLS THAT ALIGN WITH TRADITIONAL PRACTICES.

STEP 1: IDENTIFY CLUTTER CULPRITS

EXAMINE ITEMS YOU HAVEN'T USED IN THE PAST SIX MONTHS.

FOCUS ON SINGLE-USE GADGETS (E.G., AVOCADO SLICERS, EGG COOKERS) AND BULKY APPLIANCES.

STEP 2: ASK YOURSELF:

DO I USE THIS REGULARLY?

DOES THIS SERVE A MEANINGFUL PURPOSE IN MY KITCHEN?

CAN A SIMPLER TOOL DO THE SAME JOB?

STEP 3: LET GO OF NON-ESSENTIALS

DONATE UNUSED ITEMS TO A LOCAL CHARITY.

RECYCLE OR RESPONSIBLY DISPOSE OF BROKEN GADGETS.

STEP 4: SIMPLIFY AND UPGRADE

REPLACE CLUTTERED GADGETS WITH VERSATILE, HIGH-QUALITY TOOLS.

OPT FOR TIMELESS ITEMS LIKE CAST IRON SKILLETS OR STURDY WOODEN SPOONS THAT ALIGN WITH TRADITIONAL COOKING.

STEP 5. BUILDING YOUR TRADITIONAL PANTRY

WITH YOUR KITCHEN DECLUTTERED AND ORGANIZED, IT'S TIME TO STOCK IT WITH ESSENTIALS FOR NOURISHING TRADITIONS:

DRY STAPLES: HEIRLOOM GRAINS, DRIED BEANS, UNBLEACHED FLOUR, AND RAW NUTS.

PRESERVATION BASICS: VINEGAR, UNREFINED SALT, RAW HONEY, AND SPICES.

FERMENTATION SUPPLIES: STARTER CULTURES (LIKE WHEY OR SOURDOUGH), PICKLING SPICES, AND SEAWEED.

STEP 6: INSPIRATION: A THOUGHTFUL SPACE

CREATING A KITCHEN YOU LOVE IS ABOUT MORE THAN JUST ORGANIZATION. ADD PERSONAL TOUCHES THAT INSPIRE JOY AND CREATIVITY:

HANG A FAVORITE RECIPE CARD OR FAMILY PHOTO.

USE GLASS JARS TO DISPLAY COLORFUL SPICES OR DRIED HERBS.

INCORPORATE NATURAL ELEMENTS LIKE WOODEN UTENSILS OR LINEN TOWELS.

CHAPTER II: START FERMENTING

FERMENTATION IS ONE OF THE OLDEST METHODS OF FOOD PRESERVATION, A PRACTICE THAT TRANSFORMS SIMPLE INGREDIENTS INTO NUTRIENT-RICH SUPERFOODS.

THIS CHAPTER WILL INTRODUCE YOU TO THE WORLD OF FERMENTATION, FOCUSING ON ITS BENEFITS, THE ESSENTIALS FOR GETTING STARTED, AND A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO MAKING YOUR FIRST BATCH OF SAUERKRAUT. WHETHER YOU'RE NEW TO FERMENTATION OR REKINDLING AN OLD SKILL, THIS SECTION WILL INSPIRE YOU TO EMBRACE THIS TRADITION IN YOUR KITCHEN.

CHAPTER II: START FERMENTING

1. THE BASICS OF FERMENTATION

FERMENTATION IS A NATURAL PROCESS WHERE MICROORGANISMS LIKE BACTERIA AND YEAST BREAK DOWN SUGARS AND STARCHES IN FOOD. THIS AGE-OLD TECHNIQUE CREATES TANGY, FLAVORFUL DISHES WHILE ENHANCING NUTRITIONAL VALUE.

WHY FERMENTATION MATTERS:

IMPROVED GUT HEALTH: FERMENTED FOODS LIKE SAUERKRAUT AND KIMCHI ARE RICH IN PROBIOTICS, BENEFICIAL BACTERIA THAT SUPPORT DIGESTION AND IMMUNE FUNCTION.

ENHANCED NUTRIENTS: FERMENTATION INCREASES THE BIOAVAILABILITY OF VITAMINS AND MINERALS, MAKING THEM EASIER FOR YOUR BODY TO ABSORB.

NATURAL PRESERVATION: FERMENTATION EXTENDS THE SHELF LIFE OF FRESH PRODUCE WITHOUT SYNTHETIC ADDITIVES OR REFRIGERATION.

2. ESSENTIAL FERMENTATION TOOLS

GETTING STARTED WITH FERMENTATION IS SIMPLE AND REQUIRES ONLY A FEW BASIC TOOLS:

FERMENTATION CROCK OR JAR: CHOOSE A CONTAINER MADE OF GLASS, CERAMIC, OR FOOD-GRADE PLASTIC.

WEIGHTS: USE FERMENTATION WEIGHTS OR A CLEAN PLATE TO KEEP VEGETABLES SUBMERGED IN BRINE.

CLOTH OR AIRLOCK LID: COVER YOUR JAR WITH A BREATHABLE CLOTH TO KEEP OUT CONTAMINANTS, OR USE AN AIRLOCK LID TO REGULATE AIRFLOW.

CUTTING TOOLS: A SHARP KNIFE OR MANDOLINE FOR SHREDDING VEGETABLES.

MIXING BOWL: FOR MASSAGING AND SALTING VEGETABLES.

3. STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO MAKING SAUERKRAUT

SAUERKRAUT IS A CLASSIC ENTRY POINT INTO FERMENTATION.

THIS SIMPLE RECIPE REQUIRES JUST TWO INGREDIENTS: CABBAGE AND SALT.

INGREDIENTS:

1 MEDIUM HEAD OF CABBAGE (GREEN OR RED)

1-2 TABLESPOONS OF UNREFINED SEA SALT

INSTRUCTIONS:

PREPARE THE CABBAGE:

REMOVE OUTER LEAVES AND SET ASIDE.

QUARTER THE CABBAGE AND REMOVE THE CORE.

THINLY SLICE THE CABBAGE USING A KNIFE OR MANDOLINE.

SALT THE CABBAGE:

PLACE SHREDDED CABBAGE IN A LARGE MIXING BOWL.

SPRINKLE SALT EVENLY AND MASSAGE IT INTO THE CABBAGE WITH YOUR HANDS FOR 5-10 MINUTES UNTIL IT RELEASES ITS JUICES.

CHAPTER II: START FERMENTING

PACK THE JAR:

PACK THE SALTED CABBAGE TIGHTLY INTO A FERMENTATION JAR, PRESSING DOWN FIRMLY TO ELIMINATE AIR POCKETS.

POUR THE CABBAGE JUICES OVER THE TOP TO SUBMERGE THE CABBAGE COMPLETELY.

USE THE RESERVED OUTER LEAVES TO COVER THE SHREDDED CABBAGE, THEN ADD FERMENTATION WEIGHTS.

SEAL AND STORE:

COVER THE JAR WITH A CLOTH OR AIRLOCK LID. PLACE THE JAR IN A COOL, DARK PLACE (65–75°F IS IDEAL).

MONITOR AND TASTE:

CHECK YOUR KRAUT DAILY TO ENSURE THE CABBAGE REMAINS SUBMERGED IN BRINE. START TASTING AFTER 5–7 DAYS. FERMENTATION CAN TAKE 1–4 WEEKS, DEPENDING ON YOUR PREFERENCE.

STORE AND ENJOY:

WHEN IT REACHES YOUR DESIRED TANGINESS, TRANSFER THE SAUERKRAUT TO THE REFRIGERATOR TO SLOW FERMENTATION. ENJOY AS A TOPPING, SIDE DISH, OR INGREDIENT IN MEALS.

CHAPTER II: START FERMENTING

4. COMMON FERMENTATION QUESTIONS

WHY IS MY BRINE CLOUDY? THIS IS A NATURAL BYPRODUCT OF FERMENTATION AND INDICATES HEALTHY BACTERIAL ACTIVITY.

WHAT IF I SEE MOLD? MOLD CAN FORM ON THE SURFACE IF VEGETABLES AREN'T FULLY SUBMERGED. REMOVE IT CAREFULLY, BUT DISCARD THE BATCH IF MOLD PERMEATES THE BRINE.

HOW DO I KNOW IT'S READY? FERMENTED FOODS ARE READY WHEN THEY TASTE TANGY AND PLEASANT.

5. INSPIRATION: THE CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE OF FERMENTATION

ACROSS THE GLOBE, FERMENTATION IS A CORNERSTONE OF TRADITIONAL CUISINES: KIMCHI IN KOREA: A SPICY FERMENTED VEGETABLE DISH SERVED WITH NEARLY EVERY MEAL.

KVASS IN EASTERN EUROPE: A FERMENTED BEVERAGE MADE FROM BREAD OR BEETS.

NATTO IN JAPAN: FERMENTED SOYBEANS PRIZED FOR THEIR UNIQUE FLAVOR AND HEALTH BENEFITS. THESE EXAMPLES REMIND US THAT FERMENTATION IS NOT JUST A METHOD BUT A CELEBRATION OF CULTURE AND COMMUNITY.

6. QUICK FERMENTED RECIPE: PICKLED CARROTS

INGREDIENTS:

1 POUND CARROTS, SLICED

2 CUPS WATER

1 TABLESPOON SALT

1 TEASPOON DILL SEEDS (OPTIONAL)

INSTRUCTIONS:

DISSOLVE SALT IN WATER TO CREATE A BRINE. PACK CARROTS TIGHTLY INTO A JAR AND POUR BRINE OVER THEM.

SEAL AND FERMENT FOR 5–7 DAYS.

CHAPTER III: LEARN TO CAN

CANNING IS A POWERFUL TOOL FOR PRESERVING THE SEASONAL BOUNTY, REDUCING FOOD WASTE, AND BUILDING A PANTRY THAT REFLECTS YOUR COMMITMENT TO HEALTH AND SUSTAINABILITY.

THIS CHAPTER INTRODUCES THE BASICS OF WATER BATH CANNING, EMPOWERING YOU TO TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR FOOD SUPPLY AND RECONNECT WITH THE RHYTHMS OF NATURE. WITH A SIMPLE JAM RECIPE AND PRACTICAL TIPS, YOU'LL BE READY TO FILL YOUR SHELVES WITH JARS OF VIBRANT, HOMEMADE GOODNESS.

Why Canning Matters

Canning is more than just a preservation method — it's an act of reclaiming independence and honoring the traditions of generations past.

Key Benefits of Canning:

Seasonal Abundance: Preserve summer's ripe tomatoes or fall's crisp apples to enjoy all year.

Cost Savings: Buy produce in bulk at peak season for a fraction of the cost of store-bought preserves.

Food Security: Stock your pantry with shelf-stable foods free of additives and chemicals.

Community and Tradition: Share jars of homemade preserves as gifts or trade them with neighbors.

The Basics of Water Bath Canning

Water bath canning is ideal for high-acid foods like fruits, pickles, and jams. It's simple, safe, and perfect for beginners.

Essential Tools:

Large stockpot with a lid and canning rack.

Mason jars, lids, and rings.

Jar lifter, funnel, and bubble remover tool.

Clean dishcloths and a timer.

LEARNING TO CAN
STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE:

PREPARE YOUR WORKSPACE:

WASH JARS, LIDS, AND RINGS IN HOT, SOAPY WATER.

STERILIZE JARS BY BOILING THEM FOR 10 MINUTES; KEEP THEM HOT.

PREPARE YOUR RECIPE:

FOLLOW A TRUSTED RECIPE (LIKE THE SIMPLE JAM RECIPE BELOW) TO PREPARE YOUR FOOD.

FILL THE JARS:

USE A FUNNEL TO FILL JARS, LEAVING 1/4 INCH OF HEADSPACE.

REMOVE AIR BUBBLES WITH A BUBBLE REMOVER TOOL.

WIPE JAR RIMS CLEAN AND PLACE LIDS ON TOP, SECURING WITH RINGS FINGER-TIGHT.

PROCESS IN THE WATER BATH:

PLACE JARS ON THE CANNING RACK AND LOWER THEM INTO THE POT OF BOILING WATER.

ENSURE JARS ARE COVERED BY 1-2 INCHES OF WATER.

COVER THE POT AND PROCESS FOR THE TIME SPECIFIED IN YOUR RECIPE.

Cool and Store:

Remove jars with a jar lifter and place them on a towel to cool for 12–24 hours.

Check seals by pressing the center of each lid; it should not flex up and down.

Label and store sealed jars in a cool, dark place.

Simple Jam Recipe: Strawberry Jam

This recipe is a beginner-friendly introduction to water bath canning.

Ingredients:

4 cups fresh strawberries, hulled and mashed

4 cups granulated sugar

2 tablespoons lemon juice

Instructions:

Combine strawberries, sugar, and lemon juice in a large saucepan.

Heat over medium-high, stirring until sugar dissolves.

Bring to a rolling boil and cook for 10–15 minutes, stirring often, until the mixture thickens.

Test for doneness by placing a small spoonful on a cold plate; if it wrinkles when nudged, it's ready.

Ladle hot jam into sterilized jars, leaving 1/4 inch of headspace.

Process jars in a water bath canner for 10 minutes.

SAFETY FIRST:

ALWAYS USE TESTED RECIPES FROM TRUSTED SOURCES LIKE THE USDA OR BALL BLUE BOOK. ENSURE PROPER ACIDIFICATION FOR LOW-ACID FOODS BY ADDING LEMON JUICE OR VINEGAR WHEN REQUIRED. DISCARD JARS WITH COMPROMISED SEALS OR VISIBLE SPOILAGE.

TROUBLESHOOTING TIPS:

FLOATING FRUIT: THIS IS NORMAL AND DOESN'T AFFECT THE QUALITY; TRY PACKING FRUIT MORE TIGHTLY NEXT TIME.

LOSS OF LIQUID: CAUSED BY RAPID TEMPERATURE CHANGES; ENSURE A STEADY BOIL DURING PROCESSING.

FAILED SEALS: REFRIGERATE AND USE JARS THAT DON'T SEAL PROPERLY.

THE EMPOWERMENT OF CANNING

CANNING IS MORE THAN A SKILL—IT'S A CONNECTION TO THE SEASONS, A NOD TO THE WISDOM OF OUR ANCESTORS, AND A WAY TO TAKE CONTROL OF WHAT YOU FEED YOUR FAMILY. AS YOU LINE YOUR SHELVES WITH JARS OF HOMEMADE PRESERVES, YOU'RE NOT JUST STORING FOOD—YOU'RE PRESERVING TRADITION AND BUILDING RESILIENCE.

CHAPTER IV: EXPLORE RAW CULTURED DAIRY

RAW CULTURED DAIRY IS A CORNERSTONE OF TRADITIONAL DIETS, OFFERING A WEALTH OF NUTRIENTS AND BENEFICIAL PROBIOTICS.

IN THIS CHAPTER, YOU'LL DISCOVER THE JOYS OF CREATING YOUR OWN RAW YOGURT, KEFIR, AND CREAM CHEESE.

BY EMBRACING THESE SIMPLE METHODS, YOU'LL TRANSFORM FRESH MILK INTO NUTRIENT-DENSE STAPLES THAT NOURISH YOUR FAMILY AND SUPPORT VIBRANT HEALTH.

Why Raw Cultured Dairy?

Cultured dairy products are more than just delicious—they're a treasure trove of health benefits.

Key Benefits:

Rich in Probiotics: Support gut health and boost immunity.

Easier to Digest: Culturing breaks down lactose and proteins, making dairy more digestible.

Nutrient-Dense: Raw dairy retains vitamins, enzymes, and minerals often lost in pasteurization.

Versatile: Use as a base for smoothies, spreads, dressings, or enjoy on its own.

Important Note: Always source raw milk from a reputable farm that prioritizes cleanliness and animal health.

Essential Tools for Culturing Dairy

Glass Jars: For fermenting and storing.

Cheesecloth or Butter Muslin: For straining.

Thermometer: To monitor milk temperatures.

Starter Cultures: Purchase online or use existing cultures from yogurt or kefir.

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE: MAKING RAW YOGURT

RAW YOGURT IS A VERSATILE AND NUTRIENT-RICH STAPLE, PERFECT FOR BEGINNERS.

INGREDIENTS:

1 QUART RAW MILK
2 TABLESPOONS PLAIN YOGURT WITH LIVE CULTURES
(AS A STARTER)

INSTRUCTIONS:

HEAT THE MILK:

WARM RAW MILK GENTLY TO 110°F (THIS PRESERVES ENZYMES WHILE CREATING THE RIGHT ENVIRONMENT FOR CULTURES).

ADD THE STARTER:

STIR IN PLAIN YOGURT UNTIL FULLY MIXED.
INCUBATE:

POUR THE MIXTURE INTO A JAR AND COVER WITH A CLEAN CLOTH OR LOOSE LID.
PLACE THE JAR IN A WARM SPOT (110°F) FOR 6-12 HOURS.

A COOLER WITH A WARM WATER BOTTLE OR A YOGURT MAKER WORKS WELL.

CHECK FOR SET:

THE YOGURT IS READY WHEN IT HAS THICKENED AND TASTES TANGY.

Store:

Refrigerate for up to 2 weeks.

Step-by-Step Guide: Making Kefir

Kefir is a tangy, drinkable dairy product packed with probiotics.

Ingredients:

2 cups raw milk

1 tablespoon kefir grains (available online or from a friend)

Instructions:

Combine:

Add kefir grains to raw milk in a glass jar.

Ferment:

Cover with a cloth and leave at room temperature (65–75°F) for 12–24 hours.

Strain:

Remove the grains using a non-metal strainer.

Save grains for the next batch.

Enjoy:

Drink plain, add to smoothies, or flavor with honey and fruit.

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE: MAKING RAW CREAM CHEESE

TRANSFORM RAW MILK OR CREAM INTO RICH, TANGY CREAM CHEESE.

INGREDIENTS:

1 QUART RAW MILK OR CREAM
1 TABLESPOON BUTTERMILK OR YOGURT (AS A STARTER)

INSTRUCTIONS:

CULTURE:

MIX MILK OR CREAM WITH STARTER AND LET IT SIT AT ROOM TEMPERATURE FOR 12-24 HOURS UNTIL THICKENED.

STRAIN:

POUR INTO A CHEESECLOTH-LINED STRAINER OVER A BOWL.
ALLOW WHEY TO DRAIN FOR 12-24 HOURS UNTIL DESIRED CONSISTENCY.

STORE:

TRANSFER TO AN AIRTIGHT CONTAINER AND REFRIGERATE.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

USE CLEAN, STERILIZED TOOLS TO PREVENT CONTAMINATION.
EXPERIMENT WITH FERMENTATION TIMES TO ADJUST TANGINESS AND TEXTURE.
SAVE WHEY FROM STRAINING FOR USE IN SMOOTHIES, BAKING, OR FERMENTING VEGETABLES.

INSPIRATION:

THE TRADITION OF CULTURED DAIRY ACROSS CULTURES, RAW CULTURED DAIRY HAS BEEN A DIETARY STAPLE:

INDIA: HOMEMADE YOGURT OR “DAHI” IS CENTRAL TO MEALS AND RITUALS.

EASTERN EUROPE: KEFIR IS CELEBRATED AS A HEALTH TONIC.

MIDDLE EAST: LABNEH, A STRAINED YOGURT, IS USED IN SAVORY AND SWEET DISHES.

CHAPTER V: GET YOUR FAMILY INVOLVED

BRINGING YOUR FAMILY INTO THE KITCHEN IS ONE OF THE MOST MEANINGFUL WAYS TO SHARE THE JOY OF TRADITIONAL FOOD PREPARATION.

THIS CHAPTER FOCUSES ON CREATIVE WAYS TO ENGAGE YOUR LOVED ONES, MAKING THE KITCHEN A PLACE OF LEARNING, BONDING, AND PASSING DOWN TRADITIONS. FROM KID-FRIENDLY TASKS TO STORYTELLING OVER SIMMERING POTS, THESE TIPS WILL INSPIRE YOUR FAMILY TO EMBRACE A NOURISHING LIFESTYLE TOGETHER.

Why Involve Your Family?

Cooking together fosters connection, builds skills, and creates lasting memories.

Benefits of Family Involvement:

Life Skills: Teach children practical skills like measuring, mixing, and preserving.

Tradition: Pass down family recipes and cultural foodways.

Quality Time: Strengthen relationships by working toward a shared goal.

Healthy Habits: Instill a love for real, wholesome food from an early age.

Kid-Friendly Kitchen Tasks

Children of all ages can participate in traditional food preparation with age-appropriate activities.

For Younger Kids:

Washing vegetables or fruits.

Stirring dough or batter.

Decorating jar labels for preserves.

Tearing herbs or mixing ingredients by hand.

FOR OLDER KIDS:

MEASURING AND WEIGHING INGREDIENTS.
KNEADING BREAD OR ROLLING DOUGH.
CHOPPING SOFT ITEMS WITH A CHILD-SAFE KNIFE.
FILLING JARS FOR CANNING OR LAYERING INGREDIENTS FOR PICKLES.

ACTIVITIES TO BUILD FAMILY TRADITIONS

CREATE RITUALS AND MOMENTS THAT BRING YOUR FAMILY TOGETHER AROUND FOOD PREPARATION.

SEASONAL PROJECTS:

HOST A “CANNING DAY” DURING PEAK HARVEST SEASON.
PREPARE HOLIDAY RECIPES TOGETHER, LIKE FRUIT PRESERVES OR SPICED APPLE BUTTER.
CREATE A SEASONAL FERMENTATION PROJECT, LIKE SAUERKRAUT OR KIMCHI.

STORYTELLING MOMENTS:

SHARE FAMILY STORIES OR TRADITIONS WHILE COOKING TOGETHER.
READ RECIPE CARDS PASSED DOWN THROUGH GENERATIONS AND TALK ABOUT THEIR ORIGINS.

MEAL CREATION CHALLENGES:

LET EACH FAMILY MEMBER PICK AN INGREDIENT OR RECIPE TO INCLUDE IN THE DAY’S MEALS.
CREATE A “FAMILY COOKBOOK” WHERE EVERYONE CONTRIBUTES A FAVORITE DISH.
MAKING IT FUN AND ACCESSIBLE
KEEP THE KITCHEN AN INVITING SPACE FOR EVERYONE BY ADDING ELEMENTS OF CREATIVITY AND PLAY.

Interactive Ideas:

Use colorful aprons and utensils to make the kitchen feel special.

Play music that sets the mood while you work.

Turn tasks into games, like timing how fast the kids can snap green beans.

Encourage Exploration:

Let kids experiment with small batches of flavored jams or pickles.

Allow them to taste-test and adjust seasonings in soups or sauces.

Highlighting the Value of Food Traditions:

Help your family understand the deeper meaning behind traditional cooking.

Cultural Connections:

Teach kids how traditional dishes are tied to cultural identity and history.

Explore foods from your heritage and their stories.

Mindfulness and Gratitude:

Encourage a moment of gratitude before meals to appreciate the effort behind each dish.

Discuss the journey of food from farm to table, emphasizing sustainability.

Easy Recipe: Family-Friendly Bread

This simple recipe is perfect for teaching kids about baking while creating something delicious.

Ingredients:

3 cups flour

1 tablespoon sugar

1 teaspoon salt

1 packet active dry yeast

1 cup warm water

2 tablespoons olive oil

Instructions:

Mix dry ingredients in a large bowl.

Gradually add water and oil, stirring until dough forms.

Knead for 5–7 minutes, then cover and let rise for 1 hour.

Shape into a loaf or rolls and bake at 375°F for 25–30 minutes.

Passing Down Food Traditions:

One of the most powerful ways to connect with family is by preserving and passing down culinary knowledge.

Keep it Simple:

Start with easy, achievable projects.

Focus on one skill at a time, like canning jam or making yogurt.

Celebrate Milestones:

Mark progress with a family dinner showcasing everyone's contributions.

Encourage older kids to teach younger siblings their newly learned skills.

CHAPTER VI: RECIPES

TO INSPIRE YOUR JOURNEY INTO TRADITIONAL FOOD PREPARATION, WE'RE INCLUDING A SEASONAL RECIPES THAT COMBINES THE TECHNIQUES OF FERMENTATION, RAW DAIRY, AND SPROUTED GRAINS, SHOWCASING THE VIBRANCY OF NOURISHING TRADITIONS.

CHAPTER 6

Recipe:

Fermented Vegetable and Raw Yogurt Salad with Sprouted Grain Croutons

This colorful, tangy salad is a celebration of seasonal flavors, gut-friendly probiotics, and nutrient-dense ingredients.

Ingredients

For the Salad:

2 cups mixed fermented vegetables (e.g., sauerkraut, carrots, radishes)

1 cup fresh greens (arugula, spinach, or kale)

1/2 cup cherry tomatoes, halved

1/4 cup raw yogurt

2 tablespoons fresh dill, chopped

1 tablespoon olive oil

Salt and pepper to taste

FOR THE SPROUTED GRAIN CROUTONS:

2 SLICES OF SPROUTED GRAIN BREAD, CUT INTO CUBES

1 TABLESPOON OLIVE OIL

1 TEASPOON GARLIC POWDER

1/2 TEASPOON SEA SALT

INSTRUCTIONS

STEP 1: PREPARE THE CROUTONS

PREHEAT OVEN TO 375°F.

TOSS BREAD CUBES WITH OLIVE OIL, GARLIC POWDER, AND SALT.

SPREAD ON A BAKING SHEET AND BAKE FOR 8–10 MINUTES, STIRRING ONCE, UNTIL GOLDEN AND CRISP. SET ASIDE TO COOL.

STEP 2: ASSEMBLE THE SALAD

IN A LARGE BOWL, COMBINE FERMENTED VEGETABLES, FRESH GREENS, AND CHERRY TOMATOES.

IN A SMALL BOWL, WHISK TOGETHER RAW YOGURT, OLIVE OIL, DILL, SALT, AND PEPPER. POUR THE DRESSING OVER THE SALAD AND TOSS GENTLY TO COMBINE.

STEP 3: ADD THE CROUTONS

TOP THE SALAD WITH SPROUTED GRAIN CROUTONS JUST BEFORE SERVING FOR ADDED CRUNCH.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

CUSTOMIZE YOUR VEGETABLES:
USE WHATEVER FERMENTED
VEGETABLES YOU HAVE ON HAND
OR EXPERIMENT WITH NEW
FLAVORS.

SEASONAL TWIST:
SWAP OUT GREENS OR
TOMATOES FOR OTHER
SEASONAL PRODUCE LIKE
ROASTED SQUASH OR BEETS.

DAIRY-FREE OPTION:
REPLACE RAW YOGURT WITH A
TANGY CASHEW CREAM OR
COCONUT YOGURT.

INSPIRATION:
A SEASONAL CELEBRATION
THIS SALAD EMBODIES THE
HEART OF NOURISHING
TRADITIONS BY BRINGING
TOGETHER FERMENTED
VEGETABLES FOR GUT HEALTH,
RAW DAIRY FOR NUTRIENTS, AND
SPROUTED GRAINS FOR
DIGESTIBILITY.

IT'S A REMINDER THAT
TRADITIONAL FOODS CAN BE AS
BEAUTIFUL AS THEY ARE
BENEFICIAL.

CHAPTER 6

Fermented Garlic Honey

This sweet and savory ferment is a versatile condiment, perfect for boosting immunity or adding flavor to marinades, dressings, or teas.

Ingredients:

1 cup raw honey

10–12 garlic cloves, peeled

Instructions:

Slightly crush the garlic cloves to release their juices.

Place the garlic in a clean glass jar and cover with raw honey, leaving 1 inch of headspace.

Stir to remove air bubbles, then cover loosely with a lid to allow fermentation gases to escape.

Store at room temperature and stir daily for 1–2 weeks, or until bubbles form.

Once fermented, seal the jar and store in a cool, dark place. Use within 6 months.

RAW MILK RICOTTA CHEESE

THIS CREAMY CHEESE IS SIMPLE TO MAKE AND PERFECT FOR LASAGNAS, DESSERTS, OR AS A SPREAD FOR SOURDOUGH BREAD.

INGREDIENTS:

1 QUART RAW MILK
2 TABLESPOONS WHITE VINEGAR OR LEMON JUICE
1/2 TEASPOON SEA SALT

INSTRUCTIONS:

HEAT THE MILK GENTLY IN A SAUCEPAN UNTIL IT REACHES 185°F, STIRRING OCCASIONALLY.
REMOVE FROM HEAT AND ADD VINEGAR OR LEMON JUICE, STIRRING GENTLY UNTIL CURDS FORM.
LET THE MIXTURE REST FOR 5–10 MINUTES, THEN STRAIN THROUGH A CHEESECLOTH-LINED COLANDER.
ALLOW TO DRAIN FOR 15–30 MINUTES, DEPENDING ON DESIRED CONSISTENCY.
TRANSFER TO A CONTAINER, MIX IN SALT, AND REFRIGERATE. USE WITHIN 5 DAYS.

SPICED FERMENTED CARROT STICKS

A CRUNCHY, TANGY SNACK OR SIDE DISH THAT SUPPORTS GUT HEALTH.

INGREDIENTS:

1 POUND CARROTS, PEELED AND CUT INTO STICKS
1 TABLESPOON SEA SALT
1 TEASPOON CUMIN SEEDS
1 TEASPOON CORIANDER SEEDS
2 CUPS FILTERED WATER

INSTRUCTIONS:

DISSOLVE SALT IN WATER TO CREATE A BRINE.
PACK CARROT STICKS AND SPICES INTO A GLASS JAR, LEAVING 1 INCH OF HEADSPACE.
POUR BRINE OVER THE CARROTS, ENSURING THEY'RE FULLY SUBMERGED. USE A FERMENTATION WEIGHT IF NEEDED.

COVER THE JAR WITH A CLOTH OR AIRLOCK LID AND FERMENT AT ROOM TEMPERATURE FOR 5–7 DAYS.
TASTE FOR DESIRED TANGINESS, THEN REFRIGERATE. USE WITHIN 1 MONTH.

Sprouted Grain Pancakes

A hearty, nutrient-rich breakfast made with sprouted grains for better digestion and flavor.

Ingredients:

1 cup sprouted wheat flour

1 teaspoon baking powder

1/4 teaspoon sea salt

1 egg

1 cup raw milk or yogurt

1 tablespoon raw honey or maple syrup

1 teaspoon vanilla extract (optional)

Butter or coconut oil for cooking

Instructions:

In a bowl, mix flour, baking powder, and salt.

In another bowl, whisk together the egg, milk, honey, and vanilla.

Combine wet and dry ingredients, mixing until just combined.

Heat a skillet over medium heat and add butter or oil.

Pour batter onto the skillet in small circles and cook until bubbles form on the surface. Flip and cook for another 1–2 minutes.

Serve with raw honey, fruit preserves, or cultured cream.

WATER BATH CANNED TOMATO BASIL SAUCE

A FLAVORFUL, SHELF-STABLE SAUCE PERFECT FOR PASTA, SOUPS, OR CASSEROLES.

INGREDIENTS:

10 POUNDS RIPE TOMATOES
1/2 CUP FRESH BASIL LEAVES,
CHOPPED
4 GARLIC CLOVES, MINCED
2 TABLESPOONS LEMON JUICE PER JAR
1 TABLESPOON SEA SALT
2 TEASPOONS OLIVE OIL PER JAR
(OPTIONAL)

INSTRUCTIONS:

BLANCH TOMATOES IN BOILING WATER FOR 1 MINUTE, THEN TRANSFER TO AN ICE BATH. PEEL, CORE, AND DICE.

IN A LARGE POT, SIMMER TOMATOES WITH BASIL, GARLIC, AND SALT FOR 20-30 MINUTES, STIRRING OCCASIONALLY.

PREPARE STERILIZED JARS AND ADD LEMON JUICE AND OLIVE OIL TO EACH.

FILL JARS WITH HOT SAUCE, LEAVING 1/2 INCH OF HEADSPACE. WIPE RIMS CLEAN AND SECURE LIDS.

PROCESS JARS IN A BOILING WATER BATH FOR 35 MINUTES.

REMOVE JARS, LET COOL, AND CHECK SEALS. STORE IN A COOL, DARK PLACE FOR UP TO 1 YEAR.