

Brined beetroot with orange and juniper

Adapted from the recipe in my book *Ferment a guide to the ancient art of culturing foods*

Treat this recipe as a guide to the principles of brining ingredients. Replace the beets with whole radishes or turnips and use whichever spices you like. They can be eaten as soon as you like but the texture, flavour and probiotic nature all improve with a longer fermentation.

Ingredients

1 litre (4 cups) filtered water
30g sea salt
5 celery stalks, cut into 5cm pieces (or smaller depending on your jar)
6–8 medium beetroot, peeled and cut into chunks
2 bay leaves
Zest of 1 orange
1/2 teaspoon juniper berries, lightly bruised in a mortar and pestle
1/2 teaspoon mixed peppercorns, cracked

Method

1. Bring 250 ml (1 cup) of the water to the boil in a large pan. Add the salt and stir until dissolved. Add the remaining water, then take the pan off the heat and allow the brine to cool to room temperature.
2. Put the celery in the jar with the beetroot, bay leaves, orange zest, juniper berries and peppercorns. Fill the jar completely, wedging the vegetables in as snugly as possible.
3. Pour in just enough of the cooled brine to completely cover all the ingredients, leaving 1–2 cm of space from the rim of the jar. Tap the jar on a folded tea towel to dislodge any air pockets. Close the lid tightly and place the jar on a tray to catch any liquid that may leak out during fermentation.
4. Leave in a cool spot, out of direct sunlight, with temperatures around 18–24°C, for 7–21 days or until furiously bubbling. When the bubbles subside, the brined vegetables are ready to eat, but if you prefer them sourer, leave the jar out for another 1–2 weeks. When they are to your liking, slow the fermentation process by storing the jar in the fridge.
This will keep for 6–12 months.

**Makes enough to fill a 1.5 litre (51 fl oz/6 cup) jar.
Ready in approximately 3 weeks.**