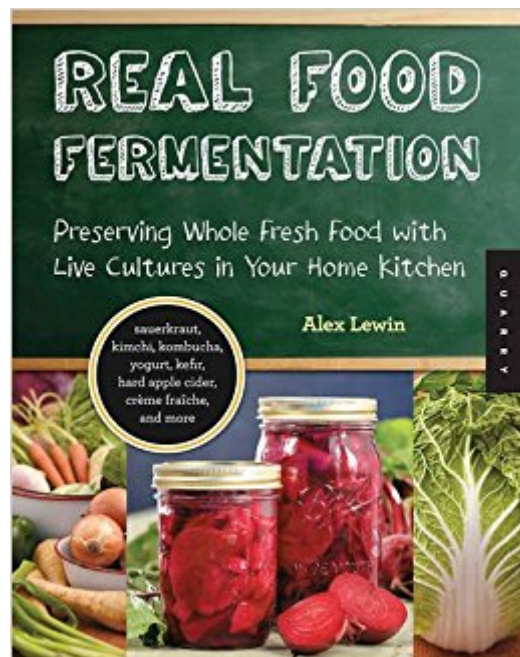




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# Real Food Fermentation: Preserving Whole Fresh Food With Live Cultures In Your Home Kitchen



## Synopsis

Preserve your favorite foods through every season with Real Food Fermentation. Control your own ingredients, techniques, and additives. Learn a practical food-preparation skill you'll use again and again. And express yourself by making something unique and whole. Inside, you'll find:

- All the basics: the process, the tools, and how to get started
- A guide to choosing the right ingredients
- Sauerkraut and beyond
- How to ferment vegetables, including slaw-style, pickles, and kimchi
- How to ferment dairy into yogurt, kefir, crÃªme fraÃ¢che, and butter
- How to ferment fruits, from lemons to tomatoes, and how to serve them
- How to ferment your own beverages, including mead, kombucha, vinegar, and ginger ale
- A primer on fermented meat, fish, soy, bread, and more
- Everything you need to know about why the recipes work, why they are safe, what to do if they go wrong, and how to modify them to suit your taste

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Cucumber PicklesView larger Cucumber Pickles Pickled cucumbers, or simply

“pickles,” are a quintessential fermented food. The first record of pickles comes from ancient Mesopotamia. Such diverse historical figures as Aristotle, Julius Caesar, Shakespeare, Amerigo Vespucci, and Thomas Jefferson are reported to have been fond of pickles. Indeed, Amerigo Vespucci, after whom America was named, was a pickle vendor before he became a world explorer. Pickles play a significant role in the food culture of many countries, from

North America through Europe and into the Middle East. Preparation: 1. ) If your cucumbers are at all soft, if you bought them at the store, and/or if you suspect that they might have been picked a while ago, you can perk them up by soaking them in ice water. 2. ) Trim the blossom ends off your cucumbers. These ends contain enzymes that can contribute to "hollow pickle syndrome." 3. ) Combine the chlorine-free water and salt in the pitcher, and add any starter or vinegar, if using. 4. ) Place the seasonings and tannin providers at the bottom of the jar or crock, followed by the cucumbers. 5. ) Pour the brine into the crock. 6. ) Weight everything down in such a way that it stays submerged. 7. ) If needed, cover the top of the jar or crock with the cloth, and affix the cloth with the rubber band. 8. ) Store at cool room temperature. Every day after the second or third, pull out a pickle, cut off a piece with a clean knife, and taste it. When the pickles are pleasantly sour but still crunchy, they are done. Move them to a cool place (like the refrigerator) immediately. Yield: 3 to 4 pounds (1.5 to 2 kg), Prep time: 10 minutes, Total time: 3 days to 2 weeks Equipment: Knife; Cutting board (wood is ideal); 1-gallon (4-L) pitcher; 2-gallon (2-L) mason jar, a Pickl-It, a Harsch crock, or a plain glazed (lead-free) ceramic crock; Something to hold the cucumbers under the brine, like a small clean plate or saucer that fits inside the jar or crock (if needed); Clean dishtowel or cloth to cover the top of the jar or crock along with a rubber band (if needed). Ingredients: 3 or 4 pounds (1.5 or 2 kg) small, thick-skinned cucumbers 2 quarts (2 L) chlorine-free water 2 cup (115 g) sea salt Up to 1 cup (250 ml) whey or 1 pint (475 ml) sauerkraut juice, or starter powder from an envelope (optional) Seasonings: generous amounts of whole garlic, bay leaf, etc. (optional) A few fresh grape or oak leaves, or a couple of black tea bags, for their tannins (optional) Red wine vinegar or apple cider vinegar, boiled and cooled to replace up to half of the water (optional)

Alex Lewin, a graduate of Harvard, the Cambridge School of Culinary Arts, and the Institute for Integrative Nutrition, seeks to create a healthier and tastier world by spreading the word about fermentation and real food. He teaches fermentation classes and workshops and serves on the board of the Boston Public Market Association, working to create a year-round indoor market selling local food. He lives in Boston and San Francisco. To learn more about this book, visit [RealFoodFermentation.com](http://RealFoodFermentation.com).

I had not heard of this author before, so I did a bit of background research to find out more about him. Alex Lewin is a software engineer, health coach, and 'real food' advocate who lives in Boston and San Francisco. He has a degree from Harvard in mathematics, has completed the Professional

Chef Program at the Cambridge School of Culinary Arts, and has received training as a health coach at the Institute for Integrative Nutrition. He's currently working for the crowdsourced video broadcasting startups Justin.tv and Twitch.tv and serving as vice president of the 501(c)(3) nonprofit Boston Public Market Association. Since 2009, he has run a 'real food' blog (feedmelikeyoumeanit dot com) and led workshops on food preservation. In addition to his blog, he is active on LinkedIn, Twitter, and Facebook; a Google search turns up advertisements for his workshops, articles highlighting his volunteer activities and food advocacy, and a few mentions of his sustainable technology hedge fund, Atlas Capital Investments, in which he is a partner along with *Solar Revolution* author Travis Bradford. In his blog bio, he lists Vandana Shiva, Kurt Vonnegut, Anthony Bourdain, Andrew Weil, Barry Sears, Dr. Weston A. Price, Sally Fallon, and Sandor Katz as important influences. He blacked out his blog in protest of SOPA and professes a preference for free and open-source software, so he's obviously got his priorities in order. Granted, you're buying a copy of Lewin's book and not a copy of Lewin himself. Hopefully, though, this information will help you understand this book - Lewin's first - a little better.

The Introduction and Chapter 1 cover the basic concepts of food preservation and fermentation, ending with a reasonably detailed overview of the kitchen equipment you will most likely need to create this book's recipes. Lewin cares deeply where the food he's fermenting has come from. Chapter 2 ("Know Your Ingredients," 20 pages) is entirely devoted to the issue of Real Food, covering topics including food freshness and buying local. Instead of making a blanket declaration that organic produce is always superior, Lewin advocates that consumers open a dialog with food producers to really understand where their food comes from. While this might be possible in a farmer's market, he concedes that it is not always practical. I like the vision he has for a better world, but I also appreciate that he is realistic. The recipes themselves fill out the remaining 110 pages. Chapters are devoted to sauerkraut, vegetables, dairy, fruits, beverages, and meat. Unlike Sandor Katz, Lewin makes no attempt to be comprehensive: beer, wine, soy (soy sauce, tempeh, natto, and miso), and even bread receive only a few short words of description and do not include recipes. Strategically, I think this makes sense - *Wild Fermentation* and *The Art of Fermentation* already exist, and there is no point in duplicating them. Instead, Lewin has presented a small number of very well tested recipes in such a way that even the most inexperienced and conservative in the kitchen might be enticed to try them out.

Covered in detail: sauerkraut; root and other vegetables; Caroline-style slaw; cucumber pickles; kimchi, yogurt; strained yogurt and whey; kefir; creme fraiche; butter and buttermilk; preserved lemons and limes; peach and plum chutney; pico de gallo; hard apple cider; mead; kombucha; vinegar; ginger ale; corned beef. In contrast to the often rather vague 'recipes' in Katz'

seminal works, these are laid out much more like they would be in a traditional cookbook: each recipe includes a quantitative ingredient list followed by very explicit instructions and many, many photographs. Ahhh, the photographs! - they are rather gratuitous. In the sauerkraut recipe, for instance, an entire page is devoted to six full-color photographs and 100 words illustrating how to chop a bell pepper. One half of the surface area of pages 70-71 are images of, variously: water being poured into a Mason jar; a root vegetable being coined; salt pouring from a bowl into some water; and a food processor. While some of these images - for instance, an illustration on page 60 entitled 'The Evolution of Sauerkraut' that shows how the colors change as fermentation progresses - are quite helpful, nine out of every ten serve more to titillate than to educate. This is food porn, and in his blog Lewin is unapologetic: "There are other fermentation books out there, including some new ones, but to be honest, mine is the prettiest by far..." While 'The Art of Fermentation' is laid out more like a textbook, 'Real Food Fermentation' has a very modern (love it or hate it) layout. The margins and line spacing are broad, and large full-color photographs fill about one out of every three pages. While it has about the same number of pages as 'Wild Fermentation', the open layout fits significantly less text per page - I received the book this morning and read it straight through in a day. Those experimenting with fermentation for the first time, however, may find the pictures to be worth a thousand words. I will update this review with more information about the recipes once I have had an opportunity to try them. The Carolina slaw, pico de gallo, and plum chutney look especially good, so I'm setting up this weekend to ferment them exactly as written. If you're brand new to fermentation, consider purchasing this book and *Wild Fermentation: The Flavor, Nutrition, and Craft of Live-Culture Foods* to complement each other. If you want an encyclopedic account of food fermentation's history around the world and aren't as interested in recipes, *The Art of Fermentation: An In-Depth Exploration of Essential Concepts and Processes from Around the World* is your book. If you dislike Katz' work for its frequent philosophical wanderings and lack of explicit instructions, try this book instead. If you already have, use, and love *Wild Fermentation* and *Art of Fermentation*, you will probably not find much new information in this book. It will, however, be a useful coffee table trap for luring sometimes-reticent friends and family into your art.

I had purchased other Fermenting books before I bought this one. I should have started out with this one instead. Cover many types of foods, vegetable, milk meat etc. The best thing is that he explains what started to use and why. Also has some good recipes that don't take much time but give good results. If you are starting with Fermentation, I would recommend this book. You might save money by not buying other books that really don't explain what you

need to know.

I checked this book out from the library and liked it so well that I bought myself a copy of it. It clearly explains how food fermentation works and includes recipes to follow. It gives you enough background information that you aren't just following the recipes, but are fully understanding how they work. I particularly like that it explains how you can adapt recipes to suit your own needs. Most cookbooks want you to use their recipes exactly, but this author encourages you to change them in ways that please you. The recipes are easy to follow and modify. They include full-color photographs of the steps so you can see what you should be doing instead of just reading about it. With it, I was able to make my own yogurt, strain it, and use the strained whey to start my own fermented vegetables. I am very happy with this book.

I really like this book and I will definitely recommend it to ANYONE who is just getting started in the world of fermentation. I do wish I had realized that it was only basics before I had purchased, but nonetheless, there are some good tips and tricks even for people with a bit more experience. On the whole, if you are the type that does better with specifics, if you find the Katz books too open to work from, you will enjoy this. If you are an experimenter, you'll probably feel like I do. It's pretty, the author knows his business, but there isn't a whole lot of exciting and new stuff to learn here.

This is good for small batches made in mason jars. If you have a large crock and want to do an entire garden crop you may have to get the calculator out. The Carolina coleslaw recipe in here is really good.

I have been interested in increasing the amount of probiotic foods I have in my diet and wasn't sure where to begin. I had kind of a good idea from YouTube videos but nothing really... well... complete. This book turned out to be a pretty great a-to-z for a beginner like me as well as providing a depth of knowledge I hadn't picked up researching prior to this book. Great simplicity, detail, and is carefully thought out for a beginner or intermediate.

Well, I am a beginner at fermenting foods, so none of this was old hat to me. I've been making my own salad dressing and condiments for a while, but I wanted to take it a step further and start making my own yogurt, butter, and sauerkraut. When I started researching recipe books on fermentation, I saw several of them out there, but this one looked the most appealing to me. It really

seemed to cover the basics, which is what I was after. I didn't want recipes that added grains or sugar, either, so that was another reason I choose this book. Very glad that I did. First of all, I really like the images and layout. Straightforward, yet fun to read. You can tell the author is really into this stuff, and explains everything very clearly and completely, and includes some food history, which is fascinating. There are even a couple of sections in the back of the book on fermenting beer and wine, which I thought was cool, not that I plan to ferment my own wine anytime soon, but I appreciated that little extra touch. Plan on making the sauerkraut this week. Also just ordered some raw, grass-fed milk, so plan to make my own yogurt next weekend. Now that's something you're not likely to find at the grocery store, even if you shop at Whole Foods. So very happy to have these recipes all together in one place.

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