How On Earth Did Sauerkraut Become The World’s Most Successful Superfood...

And What It Can Do To Help You.
Table of Contents

I. History
   The story of the world’s first real “Superfood”

II. SuperFood
   From colds to cancer, the health benefits of sauerkraut

III. Sexy Sauerkraut?
   How one of the world’s oldest foods became famous and loved by celebrities

IV. Preparation
   How America’s best-tasting sauerkraut is made

V. Recipes for All Occasions
   Pizza, chocolate cake and more!
Sauerkraut

The History of the world’s first real Superfood

The word sauerkraut immediately conjures images of Germany, Hot dogs and grandma making a batch in her bathtub, but the history of sauerkraut actually began a long time ago in a land far, far away...

When the rulers of the ancient Chinese Ming Dynasty needed protection from Mongol invaders they began the construction of earth’s largest defensive fortification, the Great Wall of China. It is in the records of this massive undertaking that the first evidence of sauerkraut appears. Almost 2000 years ago the Chinese began fermenting shredded cabbage in rice wine. This quick and easy method of preparing cabbage allowed it to be kept for months with no costly cooling. The resulting product kept thousands of laborers healthy in the worst of conditions.

Unfortunately for the Ming Dynasty, the Mongols eventually broke through their wall under the leadership of Genghis Khan and despite their reputation for ruthlessness quickly took a liking to the unique taste of the Chinese pickled cabbage. The concoction’s ability to keep for long periods of time and easy preparation made the cabbage product a perfect choice for the Mongol horde as they conquered most of the known world. In fact, it was these Mongol hordes that brought the idea of fermenting cabbage to Europe.

It was around the 16th century that the Germanic peoples began fermenting the shredded cabbage in its own juices creating the product we know today as sauerkraut. As the Dutch empire grew in the 17th century, sauerkraut became a staple food for the long sea voyages. The high vitamin C content, as well as its ability to last for a long time, made it the perfect food to fight scurvy, the dreaded disease of ocean-going sailors. It is widely accepted that Captain James Cook once ordered 25,000 pounds of “sour krout” to outfit two of his ships exploring the South Pacific.

During the great migration to the New World, Germanic peoples brought their favorite vegetable to America where they integrated sauerkraut into the new country’s diverse climate. The word sauerkraut was first mentioned in the American English Dictionary in 1776 and is commonly associated with German communities. Immigrants in America carried barrels of sauerkraut with them to the United States, as the properties in sauerkraut helped fight disease.

Evidently the health properties of sauerkraut did not go unnoticed by Americans. During the Civil War some enlightened doctors fed sauerkraut to prisoners of war, reducing the death rate from smallpox from 90 percent to only 5 percent.

Sauerkraut vs. limes

As the British Navy began exploring and establishing colonies in more tropical climates they brought limes on ships to replace sauerkraut as a scurvy fighter. The German Navy, however, kept their beloved sauerkraut on board.

During the great wars of the 19th century, the competing navies created salang for each other based on their preference for a vitamin C source. The Germans became “Krauts” and the British became “Limeys.”

Spiderman and sauerkraut?

Yes folks, it’s true, the connections between the two go back — WAAAAAY back to the creator of Spiderman, the Hulk and the X-Men. Creator: Native New Yawker Stan Lee, the real man behind the mask. Stan appeared in a cameo as a hot dog vendor in the X-Men movie, and, according to a recent interview in PR.com: “There was this scene on the beach, and they had me selling hot dogs in the background while something went on. You only saw me on the screen for a couple of seconds but being the perfectionist that I am, I kept saying to the director, Bryan Singer, ‘What is my motivation? Should this hot dog that I’m trying to sell have mustard and sauerkraut?’”
It was in 1905 that Allen Slessman combined several small great lakes-area sauerkraut manufacturers to form The Fremont Kraut Company. After acquiring Frank’s Pure Food Company in 1933, the Frank’s Kraut brand of sauerkraut was developed and remains the best tasting, most authentic sauerkraut made in the U.S. today. Frank’s is known as the highest-quality U.S. kraut because it is still hand made in small batches using the same oak casks that date back from the turn of the century.

Sauerkraut is still a popular item all over the world including Eastern Europe and France (Chocrute), and is consumed by most of the population daily in Asia (Kimchee). Kimchee has made international headlines lately after South Korean scientists fed sauerkraut to a group of 13 chickens infected with the Avian Flu and 11 of them recovered within a week! Truly a superfood!

Better than chicken soup!

The history of sauerkraut shows that its health benefits have been enjoyed for over two thousand years, spread from armies to explorers to citizens across the globe. However, modern day science has found that sauerkraut contains many more healthy and disease fighting properties than could have ever been imagined. Recent studies have shown it to be a proven cancer fighter and possibly a cure for avian flu.

Sauerkraut is Newest Celebrity Superfood

Sauerkraut has recently been found to have more health benefits than virtually any other vegetable on the planet. The cruciferous vegetable is high in antioxidant cancer-fighting compounds, fiber, vitamins, calcium and minerals and even increases libido! “Sauerkraut has a very healthy heritage; it’s a humble food that’s flavorful, versatile, has been eaten in one form or another for centuries, and is only now being realized for its inherent health potential. We’ve been manufacturing sauerkraut for four generations and demand has never been stronger - across all age groups...” The spotlight was focused on sauerkraut with a study published in the October 23, 2002, Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry.

1. Sauerkraut as Immune Booster

One of the not-so-secret benefits of sauerkraut is the boost it gives to immune systems. Packed with vitamins and minerals, sauerkraut has been used as a lay immune booster for centuries.

Sauerkraut contains phytochemicals that are created during the fermentation process. These naturally occurring, beneficial by-products of sauerkraut help boost the immune system, which leads to a decrease in a number of...
health problems. The common cold, skin problems, weight gain and tainted blood are all fixed by a healthy functioning immune system.

2. Sauerkraut as Cancer Fighter

The most recent evidence of sauerkraut’s status as a SuperFood is found in numerous studies on the cruciferous wonder’s cancer-fighting properties.

The results of a study published in the Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry concluded that sauerkraut is a cancer inhibitor. The study discovered that the fermentation of cabbage produced a substance called isothiocyanates, which prevents cancer growth, particularly in the breast, colon, lung and liver.

Although raw cabbage is normally rich in a compound called glucosinolate, the researchers found that during the fermentation process enzymes are released that completely decompose the compound into several breakdown products. The majority of these products are cancer-fighting isothiocyanates.

The University of New Mexico published a study linking sauerkraut consumption by adolescent females to a reduced risk for breast cancer. Earlier studies indicate sauerkraut may reduce the risk for other forms of cancer including lung, colon, prostate, and liver.

“We are finding that fermented cabbage could be healthier than raw or cooked cabbage, especially for fighting cancer,” says Eeva-Liisa Ryhanen, Ph.D., research manager of MTT Agrifood Research Finland, located in Jokioinen, Finland. “We are now working on ways of optimizing the fermentation process to make it even healthier so that consumers will eat more [sauerkraut].”

A recent study by the American Center for Cancer Research has found that sauerkraut has a profound effect in preventing and healing breast cancer. Based on reports that breast cancer rates among Polish women in the United States were much higher than those in Poland researchers set out to find out why. Their answer: the women who still lived in Poland ate significantly larger amounts of sauerkraut especially important while they were in adolescence. The research found that the women who immigrated ‘Americanized’ their diets and stopped eating as much of the SuperFood that is sauerkraut, thus increasing their rates of breast cancer.

3. Digestive Aid

Eating sauerkraut is a great way to protect the balance of bacteria in your gastrointestinal tract. Sauerkraut is one of the few foods that contains the bacterium Lactobacilli plantarum. L. planatarum is a very dominant strain of healthful bacteria which helps your digestive system in the following ways:

- boosts the immune system by increasing antibodies that fight infectious disease
- inhibit pathogenic organisms including E.coli, salmonella and unhealthy overgrowth of candida (yeast)
- create antioxidants (glutathione and superoxide dismustase) that scavenge free radicals which are a cancer precursor
- transforms hard-to-digest lactose from milk to the more easily digested lactic acid
- Neutralizes the anti-nutrients found in many foods including the phytic acid found in all grains and the trypsin-inhibitors in soy
- generates new nutrients including omega-3 fatty acids, digestive aids and the trace mineral GTF chromium

These various properties are the best scientific reasons given for what has been known by loyal users for millennia: sauerkraut cures an upset stomach and is the best natural physic there is.

Sauerkraut and Hypocrites

Hypocrites, the well known Greek doctor was a big fan of sauerkraut. He claimed the fermented cabbage helped patients lose weight, detoxify their bodies and heal metabolic diseases.
Many sources say raw fermented foods are beneficial to the digestive system by increasing the healthy flora in the intestinal tract or creating the type of environment for them to flourish. Sauerkraut and its juice are traditional folk remedies for constipation. Fermentation actually increases nutrient values in the cabbage, especially vitamin C. Fermented foods are also said to facilitate the breakdown and assimilation of proteins, therefore having soothing effect on the nervous system.

The benefits of sauerkraut and sauerkraut juice have been recognized for generations. In some families of southern Germany, the children are fed raw sauerkraut twice weekly to support their intestines. Today it is thought that these benefits may relate to a high proportion of lactic acid in sauerkraut and sauerkraut juice that naturally supports the digestive processes, maintain intestinal flora and increase the feeling of well-being.

In “A Passion for Sauerkraut,” a recipe book by Samuel Hofer, he lists the following health benefits of sauerkraut: strengthens the acidity of the stomach, prevents constipation, stimulates peristaltic movement of the intestines, detoxifies the intestines, encourages pancreas function and stimulates the secretion of all digestive juices, re-establishes healthy intestinal flora after taking antibiotics, improves blood circulation, helps cleanse the blood, supports natural resistance against infections and strengthens the body’s immune system. It also helps rid the body of worms, lowers the sugar in the blood and urine, controls a craving for sweets and alleviates morning sickness in pregnant women, among other benefits.

4. Flu Fighter

With the fear of Avian Flu spreading across the globe, one enterprising Korean scientist, Kang Sa-Ouk of Seoul National University, took 13 chickens infected with avian flu virus and a couple of other diseases, fed them kimchi extract and found that 11 of the birds recovered. Experts reckon the vital bacteria are created during the fermenting process and this gives the dish its health-boosting qualities.

Sa-Ouk said: “The feed helps the fight against bird fly and other fly viruses.”

Kim chi is a Korean version of sauerkraut using Asian or Napa cabbage and spices. The story which has spread throughout the world led to a dramatic increase in sauerkraut sales at the end of 2005.

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It really is better than chicken soup

Creamy Reuben Soup  Servings: 8

1 c. Frank’s or Kraut, well-drained  1/2 c. onion, chopped
1/4 c. celery, chopped  3 Tbs. butter or margarine
1/4 c. unsifted flour  3 c. water
4 tsp. beef-flavored bouillon  1/2 lb. corned beef,
3 c. half-and-half
12 oz. pkg swiss cheese, shredded
6 to 8 slices rye or pumpernickel bread, toasted and cut into quarters

1. In a large saucepan cook onion and celery in butter until tender.
2. Stir in flour until smooth.
3. Gradually stir in water and bouillon and bring to boil.
   Reduce heat and simmer uncovered 5 minutes.
4. Add corned beef, kraut, half-and-half and 1 cup cheese.
5. Cook 30 minutes until slightly thickened, stirring frequently.
6. Ladle into 8 oven-proof bowls. Top each with toasted bread and
   1/2 cup cheese. Broil until cheese melts. Serve immediately.

Prep Time: 20 minutes  Cook Time: 45 minutes

Sexy Sauerkraut?

We sure think so! That’s why we created the K’tini, a traditional martini using olives stuffed with Frank’s Kraut. James Bond himself would enjoy this twist on the world’s classiest cocktail. This delicious concoction made its debut at Le Passage, Chicago’s Premiere Nightclub, in December of 2004 and quickly spread across the country. If you picked up a newspaper or turned on your TV between December 2004-April 2005 you heard about sexy sauerkraut. Yeah, it was that much of a hit!

The K’tini is simple to make and easy to enjoy. Stuff traditional cocktail olives with Frank’s Kraut and soak in vermouth. When you are ready for your K’tini add the olives to your poison of choice (gin or vodka) shake or stir and pour into a chilled glass. For fans of the dirty martini try using some Frank’s Kraut Juice instead of olive juice for a delicious change of pace!

We have seen the future and it is kraut!

LG, a South Korean company and the world’s largest manufacturers of air conditioners, is planning on releasing an air conditioner which emits the flu fighting enzyme sometime this year.

Sauerkraut Replaces the Pimento

December 14, 2004 — Sauerkraut isn’t just for hot dogs anymore. The Fremont Company in Ohio has come up with a martini featuring an olive filled with sauerkraut. It’s called the K-Tini, and it was tested recently at a nightclub in Chicago. Company vice president Chris Smith says the K-Tini is a way to promote sauerkraut as something hip and new, instead of an old style product. To make a K-Tini, stuff a green olive with sauerkraut, marinate overnight in vermouth, add vodka and shake.  (Copyright 2004 by The Associated Press. All Rights Reserved )
K’Tini n. Drink enough cocktails, and you forget about that, and that’s where the K’Tini comes in. This is sauerkraut’s first big sex-it-up step, a martini-like drink with a kraut-stuffed olive. “Sauerkraut looking for a sexy makeover” by Bill Dawson, Star-Tribune (Minneapolis, Minn.) Jan. 25, 2005

Sauerkraut is not only enjoyed by the martini drinking jet set, but celebrity chefs, actors and supermodels all enjoy the delicious taste and unsurpassed health benefits of Frank’s Kraut.

Celebrities love the Superfood!
European supermodels are not the only celebrity fans of sauerkraut: Chicago native and NYPD blue star Dennis Franz told the Santa Barbara News Press that one of his favorite comfort foods is none other than sauerkraut! Whenever music industry guru Quincy Jones is asked to submit his favorite recipe for charitable cookbooks he pulls out one of his old favorites, Chicken Sauerkraut. This delicious recipe has appeared in cookbooks, such as Star Palate, which benefits a cancer charity, and the Clinton Presidential Center Cookbook.

Speaking of recipes... almost every celebrity chef there is uses sauerkraut in one recipe or another. Emeril, Wolfgang Puck, Bobby Flay, Mario Batali, Martha Stewart and Ming Tsai all use sauerkraut in their award winning recipes.

The Food Pyramid
One reason celebs are flocking to sauerkraut is pretty obvious—it’s the diet, stupid! Check out what Men’s Health has to say about where sauerkraut fits into a weekly plan to stay slim and trim:

In its current incarnation the government’s food pyramid recommends 3-5 servings of vegetables per day. Making sauerkraut a regular part of your daily diet is not only beneficial, it’s downright patriotic. So do your duty!
Plan each meal for one week.

By knowing what you’re going to eat, and when you’re going to eat it, you’ll be more likely to stay on course. Sit down tonight and plan all your meals for one week; breakfast, lunch, dinner, and two snacks for every day. Make this a weekly ritual for every Thursday night, like balancing your checkbook or watching The Simpsons.

Two to four grams of fiber
* One medium apple, pear, orange, or banana.
* 1/2 cup of cooked asparagus, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, carrots, cauliflower, green beans, sauerkraut, or spinach.
* One ounce (about a handful) of almonds, peanuts, cashews, pecans, or sunflower seeds.
* One cup of cooked brown rice or whole-wheat pasta, or two slices of whole wheat bread.

Creating America’s Best Tasting Sauerkraut

Making sauerkraut is a time honored tradition that has been passed down among families for generations. While there are many varieties and types of sauerkraut the basic preparation method is as follows: take cleaned and shredded white cabbage and place into a sealable container, add salt and apply a lid to induce pressure. The salt drains the water out of the cabbage and allows the cabbage to ferment in its own juice. A week or two later you will have fresh, delicious sauerkraut.

Quest for Kraut: The Pickled Pride of Oconomowoc

Our testers sampled several brands of locally available sauerkraut. We agreed that Meeter’s Wisconsin Sauerkraut was a top pick, with full flavor and zesty kick. Widely available in Southern California, Meeter’s is distributed by Stokely USA of Oconomowoc, Wis. A pleasant surprise was Libby’s Crispy Sauerkraut, which lived up to its name with a light, snappy texture. A little on the salty side, it nevertheless proved itself a good kraut at a bargain price. And unlike Meeter’s, it contains no added preservatives.

Hebrew National impressed us as an unusual sauerkraut that retains the slightly sulfurous waft of fresh-cut cabbage. Faring less well were two premium brands, Boar’s Head and the Kruegermann Berlin-Style Sauerkraut, both of which tasted bland. At the bottom of the sauerkraut barrel was Trader Joe’s jar of vinegar-laced cabbage, dull gray in both flavor and color.

But the hands-down winner of our kraut tasting was the brand most familiar to residents of the Upper Midwest region: Frank’s Quality Kraut. Frank’s wowed us with a robust taste, sturdy texture and a finish with plenty of zing.
Unfortunately, Frank’s Kraut is a regional brand unavailable in California. But for kraut fans willing to go the extra mile for an exceptional can, there is hope — mail order. A case of 24 (8-ounce) cans will run you $21.60, including shipping; the 14-ounce cans are $31.10. Send a check or money order to the Fremont Co., 802 N. Front St., Fremont, OH 43420 (attention: Lori). Include a note telling Lori exactly what quantity you’re ordering, making sure to provide your street address, and your kraut will be shipped to you via UPS.

The secret to Frank’s superior taste lies in the fact that our preparation process has remained the same since 1905. In fact we use the same oak fermentation barrels to make it!

70 ton tank room including original fermenting barrels

Recipes

Sauerkraut has been around for a long time, it fights flu, cancer, colds and indigestion and is enjoyed by actors, musicians, supermodels and celebrity chefs. Yet there are millions of Americans who still have not enjoyed sauerkraut and made it a part of their daily and healthful diets. Why just throw it on top of a hot dog when there are hundreds, maybe thousands of ways to enjoy Frank’s Kraut on a daily basis.

Below are some of our favorite recipes for using Frank’s that are sure to provide you with delicious ways to consume one of the world’s healthiest foods. In addition to the ones below there are hundreds of recipes that loyal Frank’s Kraut users have submitted to www.sauerkrautrecipes.com. Try some, experiment and then submit your own!

Classic Kraut Balls Servings: 25-30 Balls
A tradition at parties across the country, these delicious appetizers will be sure to please and surprise any guest!

3 cups Frank’s Kraut drained, squeezed and finely chopped
1 medium onion, finely chopped
3 Tbs butter
1 cup cooked ham, finely chopped
1 cup cooked corned beef, finely chopped
½ medium clove garlic, crushed
6 Tbs flour
1 egg
½ tsp salt
½ tsp Worcestershire sauce
1 Tbs parsley, chopped
½ cup beef stock or bouillon
2 eggs
2 Tbs water
fine cracker meal

Step 1
1) Sauté onion and garlic in butter over low heat for 5 minutes.
2) Stir in ham, corned beef and flour. Cook until brown.
3) In a large mixing bowl, combine egg, kraut, seasoned salt, Worcestershire sauce, parsley and beef stock. Continue to cook on low and stir until mixture forms a thick paste. Remove from heat, cool and then chill overnight.

Step 2
1) Beat the remaining 2 eggs with the water. Shape chilled mixture into 1” balls. Roll balls in egg/water mixture, then roll in cracker meal.
2) Deep fry (375°F) until brown.
3) Drain on absorbent paper. Serve warm.
**Rolled Flank Steak**

This easy one-pot dinner is a delicious variation on a classic.

1 flank steak
1 tsp ground pepper
½ tsp. crushed bay leaf
1 tsp. crushed savory
2 tbs. minced onion
1 can (14 oz.) Frank’s Kraut
2-3 cups mashed potatoes

1) Pound flank steak, rub with pepper on one side. On the other side rub on the bay leafs, savory and onion.
2) Cover meat - first with sauerkraut (save juice for basting) then mashed potatoes. Roll steak and secure.
3) Bake or broil till the meat is cooked to your desired temperature. Baste with Kraut juice.

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**Sauerkraut Salad**

Servings 6

This simple and easy recipe is a healthful way to get your daily serving of sauerkraut. It is similar to coleslaw but the flavor comes from the sauerkraut, not fattening mayonnaise.

1 16 oz. can or jar Frank’s Kraut
¼ cup finely chopped celery
¼ cup chopped onion
¼ cup shredded carrot
¾ cup sugar
¼ cup vinegar

1) Drain and snip sauerkraut, reserving liquid. Rinse and drain sauerkraut well.
2) Combine sauerkraut, celery, onion and carrots.
3) In saucepan combine reserved liquid, sugar and vinegar; bring to a boil, stirring constantly. Remove from heat, pour over vegetable mixture.
4) Toss coating evenly, cover and place in the refrigerator for several hour or overnight.

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**Chocolate Sauerkraut Cake**

Believe it or not, sauerkraut cake! It might not be that healthful but it sure is delicious!

¾ cup Frank’s Kraut drained and chopped
1 ½ cups sugar
½ cup butter or margarine
3 eggs
1 tsp. pure vanilla
2 cups all purpose flour
1 tsp baking powder
1 tsp baking soda
½ tsp salt
1 cup water
½ cup unsweetened cocoa powder

Preheat oven to 350 degrees

1) In a mixing bowl, beat the sugar and butter until fluffy.
2) Add eggs one at a time, beating well after each. Add vanilla.
3) Combine flour, baking powder, soda, salt and cocoa in a medium bowl. Add to creamed mixture alternately with water. Beat well after each addition.
4) Stir kraut into batter.
5) Pour into two greased and floured 8” cake pans.
6) Bake 30-40 minutes until cake tests done. Allow to cool.
7) Frost.