

Important Tips for Making Delicious Cultured Vegetables

- [How many heads of cabbage will you need?](#)

Five or six medium heads of cabbage, when shredded will yield between 10 and 14 quart-size (32 oz.) jars of cultured veggies. There is a variable because the heads will differ in size and you may end up adding more or less of other kinds of veggies to the cabbage which will increase your end volume. You may want to make up larger batches so you won't have to make the veggies too often. Making cultured vegetables takes a good amount of time and effort, but the benefits are well worth it!

- [What kinds of cabbage should you use?](#)

Make sure the heads of cabbage (red or green) you buy are hard and heavy with leaves that are densely packed. Make sure you buy organic! The most ideal cabbage should be firm and feel like a heavy medicine ball. There are many varieties of cabbage. The lighter, leafier varieties shred into a watery, mushy mess that won't culture very well at all. Your cabbage should be fluffy and slightly moist when processed.

Note: Our experience has shown us that cabbage should comprise of at least 80% of your veggie blend. This amount of cabbage will act as a base to add smaller amounts of other veggies to. Picture a pot of soup. The broth is 80% of the soup's base, while the beans, rice, veggies, herbs and spices collectively form the remaining 20% of the soup. Carrots, sweet potatoes, beets, turnips and other hard root veggies will also make a great base for your cultured veggies, although not as economical. Adding a splash of color by using other kinds of veggies such as red, yellow or orange bell pepper, butter nut squash, dill, parsley, kale, collards and red or golden beets are all good choices to "fleck" color throughout your cabbage. Caution: Use bell peppers sparingly. They have a very strong presence. One *small* pepper for 12 to 14 jars is plenty. Remember to peel your veggies too. The skins can add a bitter flavor.

- [What about aromatics? \(Onion, ginger, herbs, garlic, etc.\)](#)

When using aromatics, keep in mind that when you culture a food you increase the flavor (especially the flavors of aromatics) many times over. If you are going to use garlic, a little goes a long way! Using just a few medium-size cloves will be enough to infuse a mild garlic taste throughout 12 to 14 jars! If you LOVE garlic, add more and you'll be happy. With ginger, a two-inch piece will delicately flavor a full batch of up to 14 jars. At Immunitrition, we never add onions to our blends. We find no matter how little we add the onion flavor ends up dominating the blend. We have used leeks a couple of times and they were a delicious addition when used in moderate amounts. When it comes to herbs such as basil, sage, rosemary, thyme and oregano use only fresh, organic herbs and add small amounts. They greatly intensify during culturing and can dominate the blend. Herbs like parsley, dill, cilantro and chives are milder and don't seem to take over in flavor, so you can use more of these. Adding a handful of caraway seeds, celery seed and whole or finely ground juniper berries can bring an exotic flair to cultured veggies.

- [What about using sea vegetables as an ingredient in your cultured veggies?](#)

Using sea vegetables (or seaweed) in your cultured veggies will substantially increase the mineral, vitamin and fiber content of your cultured veggies. Tear larger pieces of whole dulse into smaller pieces and throw it right into your blends. Dulse can also be purchased flaked and does not need soaking. Other seaweed varieties such as wakame and sea palm are not fishy at all and will need to be soaked in filtered, clean water then diced into desired size to add to your blends. Arame and hijiki have a stronger fishy flavor. NOTE: Dried seaweed expands to 300 times its size when soaked. Start out with only a few tablespoons of the dry seaweed and soak it to see how much it yields. You can always add more if needed.

- [How much culture should you use?](#)

Immunitrition suggests that you use 2 packets of culture starter for a 12 to 14 jar batch in the summer season. In the winter season, use 3 packets. Bacteria naturally grow faster in warmer climates and slower in cooler climates. Keep your box of culture starter in the refrigerator. Take the packets out at least one hour prior to adding the packet(s) to your brine. The cultures need to adjust to room temperature. Make sure that your brine is slightly warm before adding your culture packet(s). The bacteria love their warm bath, which is close to the normal temperature of your body. Dissolve the culture starter powder completely. You may wish to add a scoop or two of FOS to the brine as well. FOS is a fiber from the chicory plant. It is an all natural, sweet fiber that won't feed Candida yeast. FOS acts as an instant food source for bacteria. They will wake up and start eating and multiplying within twenty minutes. Pour the brine over your veggies, toss very well, grab your jar funnel and start filling the jars, packing the veggies down very tightly so they are under the liquid brine.

- [How will you know when your veggies are ready?](#)

In the summer months, your veggies may be done in as little as three to four days. In the winter months, they will take longer to culture - about five to seven days. Simply taste-test your veggies until they reach your desired flavor and consistency. ALWAYS use a clean spoon for each sampling! Bacteria from your mouth can contaminate your veggies giving them an "off" flavor and color.

- [Should you add sea salt at preparation?](#)

Actually, salt is an anti-microbial. In other words, it can inhibit bacterial growth. When using a culture to make your veggies, you want the culture to start multiplying as soon as possible. Adding salt may delay this process. We think it's best to add sea salt (not table salt!) to your veggies after they have finished culturing and as you serve them. This way people can decide how salty they want their own veggies to be to suit their individual palate.

We hope these tips will aid you in making the cultured veggies preparation a smooth and easy task. Lastly, another important thing to mention... You might want to invest in a plastic drop cloth for your kitchen floor. They sell them in the paint section at all hardware stores and will save you a ton of clean-up time! HAPPY CULTURING!!!