

Veggie Box Newsletter

Fall 2024 · Week 6 · Thursday, October 24th

Fermentation is the process of bacteria or yeasts breaking down carbohydrates in different foods into alcohol or acids. Yeast converts sugar into alcohol and bacteria converts sugar to make acids. People have been fermenting food for thousands of years, the first fermented foods are thought to be different milks, and alcoholic beverages most likely made from honey, fruit, or rice. Why ferment food? Depending on what you ferment, it can help extend the shelf life and several fermented foods are said to have health benefits. Fermentation is great for extending the shelf life of foods you know you won't eat right away and depending on the vegetable, storage, and ferment, they can last up to 18 months. Many fermented foods like yogurt, kombucha, kefir, and specific sauerkrauts have probiotics which are great for gut health and digestion. They work by increasing the good bacteria in your gut to help fight off bad bacteria. Fermenting different foods is something that's easy to do at home. Some of the easiest things to ferment at home are sauerkraut, pickles, kimchi, and sourdough bread. Most of these are foods you can make with Veggie Box vegetables! With things like sauerkraut, recipes, temperature, and ferment times need to be followed exactly as to not accidentally make and consume harmful bacteria.

Producer Spotlight *Owosso Organics*

Owosso Organics is a family-owned, certified organic vegetable and cut flower farm located four miles west of Owosso. Starting from a small postage stamp garden in 1978, Richard Bowie, Pooh Stevenson and their daughters Cody and Taylor now farm over seven acres of their eighty acre farm, along with eight greenhouses of over 15,000 square feet. They have been certified organic since 1994, and are currently certified with Global Organic Alliance. Their mission is to provide specialty artisan produce and flowers grown with great care and impeccable service available locally to enrich the lives and palates of all people who seek their business assisting in bridging urban and rural communities together.

Crop Profile *Bok Choy*

A deep green leafy vegetable that resembles Romaine lettuce on top and a large celery on the bottom, bok choy is a crucifer more closely related to cabbage. The entire vegetable can be used, and is often added raw to salads for a satisfying crunch. In soups, the leaves and stalks should be chopped and added separately, since the stalks take longer to cook. Cultivated in China for centuries, bok choy has played a large part not only in its cuisine, but in traditional Chinese medicine. Containing a wealth of vitamins C, A, and K, and excellent sources of calcium, magnesium, potassium, manganese, and iron, bok choy deserves its reputation as a powerhouse among vegetables. To maximize freshness, keep your bok choy sealed in a ziplock and store in the vegetable crisper drawer for up to 2 weeks. With their mild, cabbage-like flavor, they are perfect in stir fries, soups, or eaten raw.



What's in the Box?

- Garlic**, Magnolia Avenue Farms, *Lansing's Eastside*
- Bok Choy**, Hunter Park GardenHouse, *Lansing's Eastside*
- Komatsuna**, Hunter Park GardenHouse, *Lansing's Eastside*
- Organic Daikon Radishes**, Lake Divide Farm, *Stockbridge*
- Organic Ginger**, Lake Divide Farm, *Stockbridge*
- Jalapeños**, Owosso Organics, *Owosso or Magnolia Avenue Farms, Lansing's Eastside*
- Organic Sweet Pepper Mix**, Owosso Organics, *Owosso*

Add-ons

- Bread**, Stone Circle Bakehouse, *Holt*
- Coffee**, Bi-weekly, Monthly, and Decaf add-ons
- Meat Variety, Chicken Leg Quarters**, Heffron Farms Market, *Belding*
- Chicken: Ground Chicken**, Heffron Farms Market, *Belding*
- Organic Beef**, Starlight Farms, *Lake Odessa*
- Pork: Breakfast Sausage Patties**, Grazing Fields Cooperative, *Charlotte*
- Maple Syrup**, Tomac's Maple Hill Farm, *Chesaning*
- Tea**, Youth Service Corps, *Lansing's Eastside*
- Kombucha**, Apple Blossom Kombucha Co., *Lansing*
- Organic Black Beans**, Ferris Organic Farm, *Eaton Rapids*

Recipes and Tips!

Komatsuna Kimchi

- Full share Veggie Box Komatsuna
- 1.5 tablespoons kosher salt
- 1/4 cup anchovy kelp stock (or vegetable stock) or water
- 1/2 tablespoon glutinous rice flour (or rice flour, or plain flour)
- 1/2 tablespoon sugar
- 2 tablespoons fish sauce (or soy sauce)
- 2 cloves Veggie Box garlic, minced
- 1/2 teaspoon Veggie Box ginger, peeled and minced
- 2 tablespoons sliced onion
- 2 tablespoons gochu-garu (Korean hot pepper flakes)

Rinse the komatsuna in cold water: Drain, and put them into a large bowl. Sprinkle with the salt, more on thick part of the leaves. Mix well with both hands and let stand for 2 hours, turning every 30 minutes to salt evenly.

Meanwhile, prepare the kimchi paste: Combine the glutinous flour and the stock in a small saucepan and place over medium-high heat. Stir until the mixture begins to bubble, about 2 minutes. Add the sugar and stir for 30 seconds until the mixture is slightly translucent. Stir in the fish sauce. Remove from the heat, scrape into a large bowl, and let it cool. When the mixture is thoroughly cooled down, add the garlic, ginger, onion, hot pepper flakes. Mix well with a wooden spoon.

Make the kimchi: Wash the komatsuna in a couple of changes of cold water and drain. Transfer to the bowl with the kimchi paste and gently toss and mix together by hand (wear disposable gloves if you like). Transfer to an airtight container. Press down on the kimchi so it's well packed and no air can get inside, then put the lid on the container.

Serve: You can serve the kimchi right away or let it ferment. It takes about 2 weeks to ferment in the refrigerator; for faster fermenting, leave it at room temperature for a few days, depending on the warmth of your room temperature, until the kimchi tastes and smells sour. Once the kimchi is fermented, keep in the refrigerator. The kimchi will continue to ferment in the refrigerator and become more sour as time passes.

Adapted from Maangchi.com.



Yaki Udon

- 2 tablespoons dark soy sauce
- 2 tablespoons soy sauce
- 2 tablespoons oyster sauce
- 1 tablespoon mirin
- 1 tablespoon rice vinegar
- 1 tablespoon granulated sugar
- 1 pound frozen udon noodles
- Toasted sesame oil, for drizzling
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1 small yellow onion, thinly sliced
- 1 Veggie Box sweet peppers, thinly sliced
- 1 Veggie Box daikon radish, scrubbed or peeled, cut into thin 3-inch-long sticks
- 1 Veggie Box bok choy, sliced into 1/2-inch pieces
- 3 Veggie Box garlic cloves, chopped
- 3 scallions, sliced into 2-inch pieces, plus more for serving
- Crushed red pepper, to taste
- 1/2 pound ground meat (optional)
- Sesame seeds, furikake or chile oil, for serving (optional)

In a medium bowl, combine the dark soy sauce, soy sauce, oyster sauce, mirin, rice vinegar and sugar. Taste a little and balance salty, acidic and sweet flavors, if needed.

Bring a medium pot of water to boil over medium-high. Add the frozen noodles and cook, gently nudging them apart, until they separate and are pleasantly chewy, about 2 minutes. Drain, quickly rinse with cold water to stop the cooking, transfer to a medium bowl and drizzle with sesame oil, about 1 teaspoon.

In a wok or a large pan, heat 1 tablespoon of vegetable oil over medium-high. If using, add the ground meat and cook, breaking it up with a spoon, until cooked through. Using a slotted spoon, transfer the meat to a small bowl.

Pour the remaining 1 tablespoon of oil into the wok. Add the onions and daikon radish and stir-fry, tossing frequently, until fragrant and the vegetables take on a little color, 2 to 3 minutes. Add the bell pepper, bok choy and garlic; constantly stir until the vegetables cook but still have a crunch, about 3 minutes. Stir in the scallions and cooked meat; stir-fry for 1 minute. Add the noodles and sauce, tossing until the noodles are coated and glossy. Taste and adjust any seasonings, if needed.

Transfer yaki udon to bowls, and top each serving with chopped scallion and crushed red pepper, to taste. Serve with sesame seeds, furikake and chile oil, if you like.

Adapted from Cooking.NYTimes.com.