



Fermentation Supplies Guide

A guide to the tools for making fermented foods



Fermentation Systems

Here are some of the most popular systems for making ferments.

The Jar Method

The simplest system for making sauerkraut and pickles is the Jar Method. When using just a jar you will need to burp it daily to let the gas escape or leave the lid on loosely to allow the gas to escape.

You can use any glass jar you have around to make ferments or a standard mason jar. I use a standard Wide Mouth Quart size Mason Jar for all my recipes, but you can reduce most of the recipes by half or divide them up into a pint size jar or double them and make a larger amount in a 1/2 gallon mason jar.

Choose a wide mouth mason jar, because it's easier to stuff contents into it.

[You can find them on Amazon here.](#) Or you can find them in most grocery stores. Buying them in a case of 12 is usually a better deal than purchasing them individually. Trust me, you'll find plenty of uses for them besides fermenting.

JAR METHOD

Use a mason jar or other jar as a fermentation vessel.



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Waterless Airlock

These fit mason jars and allow the gas to escape while fermenting. They help prevent mold by allowing gas to escape but preventing air from getting in. I use them often and find them to be very convenient. You can set them up and forget them for the most part. Pictured here is a Pickle Pipe by Masontops.

[You can find them on Amazon here.](#)

My favorite set up is a quart size mason jar with fermentation weight and waterless airlock.



Water Airlock

Pictured here is a water airlock with silicone lid by Mason Jar Lifestyle. These fit wide mouth mason jars. There are many variations

of these available online and they're inexpensive. Water is added to the airlock so gas can escape while preventing air from getting in.

The only downside is that the airlock is made of 3 pieces and I lose pieces all the time, which renders it useless. It's maybe best for someone more organized.

You can find various affordable options of these here.

WATER AIRLOCK

An airlock that you put water in that allows gas to escape but air can't get back in.

Helpful in preventing mold.



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Ceramic Fermenting Crock

Ceramic fermenting crocks are more of an investment, but they have many advantages. Most fermenting crocks have a water moat the lid sits in that creates a seal that allows gas to escape and prevents air from entering.

They usually come with weights to keep the veggies submerged under the brine. They are mostly used for making large batches of ferments, but there are many different sizes and shapes of crocks available.

Since they are made of clay, they are thicker and heavier which insulates the ferment so the temperature inside stays consistent throughout the fermentation process. This makes a better tasting sauerkraut.

[You can find some in different sizes and price points here.](#)



Other Helpful Fermenting Tools

Fermentation Weights

Fermentation Weights are the handiest tool in the fermentation tool box. They keep your ingredients submerged under the brine, so they don't develop mold. You can purchase weights, use a rock or a cabbage leaf, slice of onion or other vegetable to help weight the veggies down.

[For more free ideas to keep your ferments weighted read my article here.](#)

[Or purchase fermentation weights here.](#)

FERMENTATION WEIGHTS

They are made to fit mason jars and keep the veggies under the brine during fermentation so they don't develop mold.



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Plastic Baggy

If you don't have fermentation weights you can use the plastic baggy method to weigh the ingredients down. Fill the plastic baggy with water or salt water to hold it down.

PLASTIC BAGGY METHOD

Use a plastic bag filled with water as a fermentation weight.



Vegetable Tamper

I waited awhile before I invested in one of these. I kinda wish I did sooner, because they help break down the cabbage faster when mixing and massaging. And they help pack sauerkraut in the mason jar really tight so there's no air bubbles. If you plan on making sauerkraut frequently, I highly recommend a tamper.

[My favorite is this one because one side can be used with a narrow mouth jar and the other with a wide mouth jar.](#)



Cutting board & Knife

Most of the work can be done with a knife and cutting board. You can chop, mince, slice and dice.

Hand Vegetable Chopper

These are great for chopping onions and other vegetables when making small batches.

Food Processor

I use a food processor for shredding cabbage, carrots, apples and making pastes or hot pepper mashes, because it saves time and makes it easy.

Salt

Use a mineral rich salt, like sea salt, Himalayan salt or Celtic salt or similar. Avoid table salt, iodized salt or salts with additives and preservatives.

I highly suggest checking out a post I wrote about salt to help you choose the right salt.

<https://www.fermentedfoodlab.com/dos-donts-using-salt-fermentation/>

Water

Many recipes will need water. The biggest issue with water and fermentation is chlorine. Chlorine is used to kill bacteria in our tap water. Using chlorinated water can prevent fermentation from happening, so use filtered water or spring water that doesn't have chlorine in it. If you find your ferments don't seem to be fermenting, then check the type of water you're using.