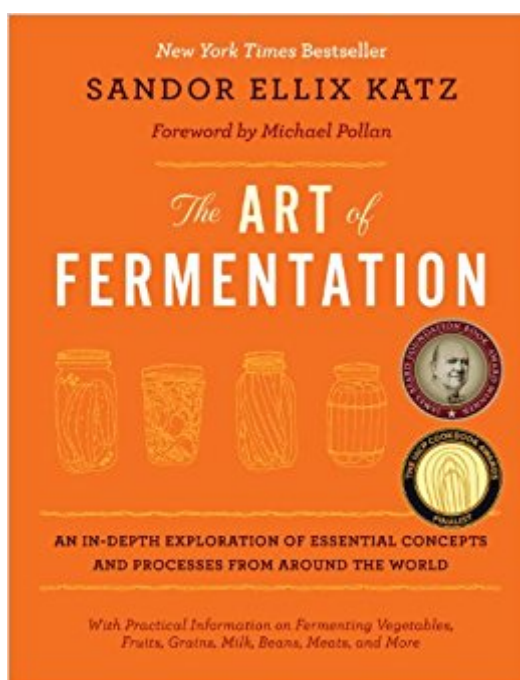


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The Art Of Fermentation: An In-Depth Exploration Of Essential Concepts And Processes From Around The World



Synopsis

Winner of the 2013 James Beard Foundation Book Award for Reference and Scholarship, and a New York Times bestseller, *The Art of Fermentation* is the most comprehensive guide to do-it-yourself home fermentation ever published. Sandor Katz presents the concepts and processes behind fermentation in ways that are simple enough to guide a reader through their first experience making sauerkraut or yogurt, and in-depth enough to provide greater understanding and insight for experienced practitioners. While Katz expertly contextualizes fermentation in terms of biological and cultural evolution, health and nutrition, and even economics, this is primarily a compendium of practical information—how the processes work; parameters for safety; techniques for effective preservation; troubleshooting; and more. With two-color illustrations and extended resources, this book provides essential wisdom for cooks, homesteaders, farmers, gleaners, foragers, and food lovers of any kind who want to develop a deeper understanding and appreciation for arguably the oldest form of food preservation, and part of the roots of culture itself. Readers will find detailed information on fermenting vegetables; sugars into alcohol (meads, wines, and ciders); sour tonic beverages; milk; grains and starchy tubers; beers (and other grain-based alcoholic beverages); beans; seeds; nuts; fish; meat; and eggs, as well as growing mold cultures, using fermentation in agriculture, art, and energy production, and considerations for commercial enterprises. Sandor Katz has introduced what will undoubtedly remain a classic in food literature, and is the first—and only—of its kind.

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Customer Reviews

Library Journal-This is not a line-by-line recipe cookbook, but it contains detailed instructions on fermenting (or creating via fermentation) nearly every imaginable food or beverage. After a foreword by Michael Pollan, Katz ("Wild Fermentation") explores the scientific basis of fermentation, then gives details for creating everything from yogurts to prosciutto to wines, beer, and kombucha. He emphasizes how fermentation influenced human development. Used to preserve food, it affected human biology so that humans could eat foods that would be poisonous otherwise, and it had an impact on global human culture as a reflection of indigenous cultural identity. Simply put, fermentation allows lactic acid bacteria naturally found in the air to overcome and exclude bacteria that are harmful to humans, and it increases advantageous chemical compounds, such as vitamins, in the process. There is a generous photo section of tools, containers, and processes; along with fascinating electron microscope photos of bacteria, which convey a sense of wonder at the unseen world of fermentation. VERDICT: Katz takes fermentation down to the molecular level while keeping it conversational and accessible to the generalist. Fermentation foodies will be ecstatic."The only resource guide you will ever need."--Jenn Garbee, LA Weekly

"The Art of Fermentation is an extraordinary book, and an impressive work of passion and scholarship. It lays the foundation for fermenting all kinds of foods, and whoever reads it will be able to negotiate any recipe for ferments (and conquer any lingering nervousness about fermentation) with impunity. I am so impressed - and ready to begin! Thank you, Sandor Katz."--Deborah Madison, author of Vegetarian Cooking for Everyone and Local Flavors

"Sandor Katz has captured the essence of fermentation in this new book, which bubbles over with scientific, historical, and practical information about humankind's first biotechnology and earth's first energy source. The mystery and sensory allure of naturally fermented products ranging from fruit, honey, milk, all manner of starchy grain, tuber and stalk--even fish and meat--are laid bare and enthusiastically and lucidly brought to life for both epicure and the do-at-homer."--Patrick E. McGovern, Scientific Director, Biomolecular Archaeology Laboratory, University of Pennsylvania Museum, and author of Ancient Wine and Uncorking the Past

"The Art of Fermentation appeals to our personal and fundamental well being, with a thoroughly engaging account of wild, tamed, and unaccounted-for microorganisms. Based on theory, science, and practical observations, Sandor Katz casts thousands of dots onto the pages for us to connect with our own experiences and interests. There are things he writes in this book that are relevant to everyone. Whether we are at war or peace with the tiny creatures we call microorganisms, we can't help but conclude that they are the building blocks of the communities we observe as organisms. His obsession with ferment is contagious. With the flip of a page it's easy to find oneself discovering

our own personal journey embedded in this thoroughly engaging book."--Charlie Papazian, author of *The Complete Joy of Homebrewing* and many other books on beer "This is, quite simply, the finest book on fermentation available. It is comprehensive, erudite, and surprisingly profound. Sandor Katz is the guru of a large and growing tribe of fermentation enthusiasts and this book will awaken you to the thrilling world of benign bacteria all around us. Not only do they provide us with pickles, cheese, bread, alcohol - but our existence depends on bacteria and they deserve our reverence and respect."--Ken Albala, Food Historian and Coauthor of *The Lost Arts of Hearth and Home: The Luddite's Guide to Domestic Self-Sufficiency* "Sandor Katz has proven himself to be the king of fermentation with this new book, an exhaustive yet very readable compendium of fermentation wisdom and techniques from around the world. A must-have in the libraries of anyone interested in food and nutrition."--Sally Fallon Morell, President, The Weston A. Price Foundation "The Art of Fermentation is a remarkable testimony to the astonishing passion that Sandor Katz has for all matters fermentative. History, science, and simple how-to wisdom are woven together in this extensive journey through the amazing diversity of foods and beverages that are founded upon fermentation."--Dr. Charlie Bamforth, Professor, Department of Food Science and Technology, University of California, Davis and author of *Food, Fermentation and Microorganisms* "The Art of Fermentation is much more than a cookbook...Sure, it tells you how to do it, but much more important, it tells you what it means, and why an act as quotidian and practical as making your own sauerkraut represents nothing less than a way of engaging with the world. Or rather, with several different worlds, each nested inside the other: the invisible world of fungi and bacteria; the community in which you live; and the industrial food system that is undermining the health of our bodies and the land. This might seem like a large claim for a crock of sauerkraut, but Sandor Katz's signal achievement in this book is to convince you of its truth. To ferment your own food is to lodge an eloquent protest-of the senses-against the homogenization of flavors and food experiences now rolling like a great, undifferentiated lawn across the globe. It is also a declaration of independence from an economy that would much prefer we were all passive consumers of its commodities, rather than creators of unique products expressive of ourselves and the places where we live."--Michael Pollan, from the Foreword

Sandor Katz is a fermentation revivalist. A self-taught experimentalist who lives in rural Tennessee, his explorations in fermentation developed out of overlapping interests in cooking, nutrition, and gardening. This book, originally published in 2003, along with his *The Art of Fermentation* (2012) and the hundreds of fermentation workshops he has taught around the world,

have helped to catalyze a broad revival of the fermentation arts. Newsweek called Wild Fermentation "the fermenting Bible," and The New York Times calls Sandor Katz one of the unlikely rock stars of the American food scene. For more information, check out his website www.wildfermentation.com.

There have been several excellent reviews that list the strengths of *The Art of Fermentation*. I can only add one thing - the author does an excellent job of citing his sources. I really appreciate that he does so - it allows me to go back and check for new, updated research and expand my reading. I particularly appreciate this in his section on fermentation and health. He adamantly does not claim fermented foods are a panacea and is skeptical of some of the touted benefits of various foods (kombucha as a cure for diabetes, for example). He argues, quite successfully, that fermented foods have their place in a well balanced, healthy, diet and provides the studies, traditions, and first-hand knowledge that demonstrates why. For those who are wondering which book would be the better choice, this book is not just an expanded version of *Wild Fermentation*. It's a different take on the subject that goes in depth in the process and concepts behind fermentation. Many different types of fermentation using different bases - grains, vegetables, fruit, etc - are explored. Be aware that this is not a cookbook or an introductory text, however. Traditional recipes are scarce. If you are looking for "add X tablespoon of salt to Y amount of cabbage" you will be disappointed. If you want to know about different fermentation methods used around the world so you can branch out in your own culinary experiments, this is the book for you. If you're an absolute novice, *Wild Fermentation* is probably the better starting place. It gives recipes and walks you through the steps more than *The Art of Fermentation*. Once you've made a few things and want to know more, the *Art of Fermentation* will really come into its own!

First off: this book is beautiful. Hardcover, with a series of full-color plates 1/3rd and 2/3rds through. For only twice the price of a flimsy paperback, you're investing in five hundred solidly-constructed pages that will last. And a good thing, because this book is destined to be a classic. You don't need to have read Katz' other work, *Wild Fermentation: The Flavor, Nutrition, and Craft of Live-Culture Foods*, to understand, appreciate, and use this book - it stands alone. If you already own *Wild Fermentation*, don't be put off by the duplication of some recipes in the Table of Contents. Yes, sauerkraut, kimchi, and pickles are in here, but every section is greatly expanded with much more information and many more references. (Ever thought of using a layer of cooking oil as an airlock? Neither had I, but I'm going to try it!) Speaking of references... the Resources, Glossary, and Works

Cited chapters could keep you busy for a few years. And yes: you will use this book. As Michael Pollan states in the well-written foreword, this is not one of those cookbooks you buy for the nice pictures and keep on your coffee table. This is a project manual. Fermentation is something you have to experience to understand, and Katz give you absolutely everything you need to get started. The first 67 pages are devoted entirely to the beginner, focusing not on specific recipes but on answering the inevitable questions: "WHY would I want to ferment food? is it safe? what equipment and general expertise do I need?" Again from Pollan: "Katz writes about the transformative power of fermentation with such infectious enthusiasm that he makes you want to try things just to see what happens." This is so true. Even if you don't initially intend to, many of these 'recipes' are so simple and unimimidating (hard apple cider, mead, sauerkraut and its derivatives, sourdough) that it's hard to resist the urge to pick up a box of Mason jars and some fresh produce the next time you're at the grocery store. Many of us are experimenters at heart, and fermentation is the perfect mix of art and science to tap into this nature and inspire all kinds of crazy projects. Already the neighborhood King of Kraut? I guarantee that this book will still have something for you. Chapter 12 - "Fermenting Meat, Fish, and Eggs" isn't enough? Turn to Chapter 13, for a short but serious discussion of what it takes to turn a fermentation hobby into a small business. Notes about scaleup, HACCP plans, and licensing are cool to read about, though I have no plans to open a tempeh factory anytime soon. Or how about Chapter 14 - "Non-Food Applications of Fermentation"? Again, I don't live on a farm, but it is neat to read about compost, silage, and bioremediation. (Surprise: Katz doesn't buy into corn ethanol biofuels) While this is by no means a biology textbook, the scientific content is much improved over Wild Fermentation. Chapter 1 - "Fermentation as a Coevolutionary Force" is, in general, accurate and well-referenced. Katz is not a formally-trained scientist, but he does not shy away from technical details when they are helpful for understanding, and he shows respect for the scientific method and its results. See, for instance, his discussion of 'homofermentative' and 'heterofermentative' organisms in vegetable fermentation (pg 96), or of commercial starter cultures (pg 132). If you subsist on white bread and margarine and bleach your cutting boards after every use, fermentation may not be the hobby for you. The first time I skimmed some strangely-textured yeast off of a crock of fermenting beets, I have to admit I was a little skeptical what those beets would look like when I pulled them out (they were absolutely delicious). While some of my more imaginative fermentation adventures have yielded delicious results, a few have been downright terrible (yep, ate them anyway!). If you don't see any issue with carving a bit of mold off some cheese or a piece of fruit instead of throwing it out, then you probably have what it takes. Many (most?) of the poor reviews on Wild Fermentation are from people taking issue with Katz' lifestyle or

philosophies. Many of his philosophical discussions in this book are backed up with hard science and references, so even those who found Wild Fermentation to be overbearing may find this new book to be more palatable. If you have some problem with the fact that Katz has HIV (he states this outright in the new book, and includes a sidebar about how fermented foods may be helpful but they are not a disease cure), do the rest of us a favor and keep it to yourself. I've been experimenting with fermentation for about a year, relying mostly on Wild Fermentation and a substantial collection of online resources. I've only had this book for a week, and I've already had tons of fun and learned a lot. When I'm finished with my read-through, this book will definitely be making its rounds among my friends. A great reference and a worthwhile investment - highly recommended.

Fermentation was frankly something I had little to no experience or interest in until a few years ago....even then it was a slow progression. For health reasons (we're not getting any younger) we started taking an active interest in food - both the quality of the food and the preparation practices. The more we learned, the more we started cooking, baking and making our own food. Bread was perhaps one of the very first things we took the time to make from scratch and soon the bread baking became a weekly tradition. Fresh baked bread is so delicious, warm and comforting. Of course, that led to grinding our own flour and since bread is so much like beer - my spouse began experimenting with home brewed beer and wine and even soda. It wasn't long before something always seemed to be brewing in the kitchen and at least one of us, was quickly becoming a fermentation fan. Over those few years, our diet, shopping habits, food choices and preparation methods changed fairly radically from what we had thought was a decent diet to an all organic, homemade diet with local produce when possible. It was during that time I started hearing more and more about the benefits of fermentation of other foods - but frankly, not having grown up around anything remotely related to food preparation, I had no idea what was/wasn't fermented. In fact, I thought pickles were always made with vinegar and canned - I had no idea they were fermented. Ditto for sauerkraut or oodles of other items. Somewhere along the line, I came across Sandor's first book on fermentation and purchased it. It was NOT love at first sight...in fact, after the first read, I thought it sounded horrible (rotted food?!) and set it aside for at least another year. Then by chance, I happened to taste some REAL pickles..then fermented salsa and several other things that just knocked my socks off. I pulled that book out and decided to give it a try. Low and behold, it worked like a charm! Soon I was buying big fermentation pots and since then we have become regular consumers of fermented products made at home. I then bought the book and video set and several other books on fermentation...in fact, by this point, I probably own most of the major books about

fermentation. So, when this came up as an advanced order option, I purchased it right away although I wasn't sure what to expect. It was delivered early and right from the start, it is obvious this book is MUCH larger than previous books. It provides a exemplary overview of fermentation from both a historical perspective as well as current uses around the globe. The information expands upon the understanding of fermentation in a dramatic way. It's both interesting and informative. Without a doubt, it's one of the best books I've read on the subject and I've read a LOT of them! Now, if you are just wanting an introduction to fermentation with a few quick and easy recipes' and examples, the older books by Katz are probably still your best choice. On the other hand, if you are a person that likes to understand a topic in depth when starting something new, this may be more to your liking. Existing fermentation fans will ABSOLUTELY want to purchase this new book for the expanded knowledge, information and insight. It will not disappoint! May your beer always bubble, your bread always rise -Your pickles always pucker and your crock never demise! Happy fermenting folks!

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