

Fermented foods



What are fermented foods?

A fermented food or beverage is a type of food made by extensive microbial growth. These foods are nothing new. They've been around for thousands of years. To understand how fermented foods are made, let's look at yogurt.

Yogurt is a fermented food made from milk. During yogurt fermentations, lactic acid-producing bacteria grow on the sugars and other nutrients in milk. As they multiply, the bacteria produce compounds that change the flavor, texture, and nutrients in the milk to give us what we know as yogurt.



The value of fermented foods

Source of live, active microbes

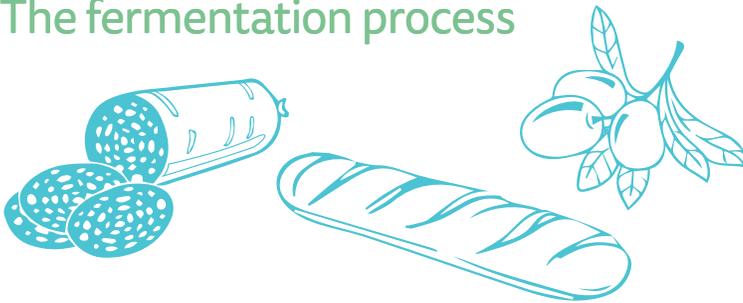
Improve food taste, texture, and food digestibility

Increase concentrations of vitamins and bioactive compounds in foods

Remove/reduce toxic or anti-nutrients in raw foods

Increase food safety and shelf-life

The fermentation process



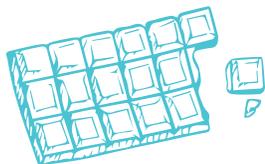
This same type of process happens in all fermented foods. Depending on the food, certain species of bacteria, yeasts and/or molds carry out the fermentation. Those microbes are still alive when we eat yogurt, kefir, cheeses, kimchi and some other fermented foods. But some foods that undergo fermentation are further processed (by pasteurization, baking, or filtering) so they are no longer sources of active microbes.

Fermented foods retaining living cultures:

- fresh kimchi
- water or brine cured olives
- kefir
- traditional salami
- yogurt
- some cheeses
- fresh sauerkraut
- fresh sour dill pickles

Fermented foods consumed without living cultures:

- tempeh
- most soy sauce
- most beer
- most wine
- sourdough bread
- chocolate



Fermented foods and gut health

The human digestive tract contains 100 trillion bacterial cells. These bacteria, termed our intestinal microbiota, are important to our health.

Modern practices, such as sanitation, antibiotic use, caesarean birth, formula feeding and eating foods devoid of live cultures, may be leading to a poorly functioning intestinal microbiota.

Fermented foods containing living cultures add beneficial bacteria to the digestive tract.

These fermented foods may benefit human health by reducing risk for some acute and chronic diseases and helping maintain a healthy intestinal microbiota.



International Scientific Association for Probiotics and Prebiotics

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