

LACTO-FERMENTED PICKLED HABANEROS

Yet another foray into fermentation! I typically prefer to do a mash ferment for peppers, but I found such a great use for these that, well, I just had to write it up. Takes a little bit o' time, but, once again, worth it!

Update 2020-05-17 (Sunday):

It always kinda bugged me that I either did have enough brine or had too much. Then I saw a tip, I think it might have been on a ProHomeCooks YouTube video, that recommended pouring in the water over the vegetables first, then drain and weigh the water. From there you can calculate the exact amount of salt you need. Easy-peasy, no waste! I updated this recipe accordingly.

INGREDIENTS

<u>Qty.</u>	<u>Unit</u>	<u>Item</u>
1	Lb	Habanero Peppers
2 - 4	TBSP	Brining Salt
1 - 2	Qt	Distilled Water

Distilled water? Yes, I think so. Municipal water is typically “treated” to some degree and well water may be funky. Distilled water gives you a nice blank slate.

SPECIAL TOOLS

- Wine cooler [i]
- (Qty. 3) quart sized, wide-mouthed Ball jars [ii]
- (Qty. 2) Easy Fermenter fermentation lids [iii]
- (Qty. 4) Easy Fermenter fermentation weights [iii]
- Easy Fermenter pump
- Good quality wood tamper
- (Qty. 2) Quart Ziploc freezer bags [iv]
- Food prep gloves [v]
- Immersion blender [vi]
- Chopstick

PREPARATION

- 1) Rinse the peppers and remove the stems
- 2) Slice peppers into of 0.5cm to 1 cm slices. REMEMBER TO WEAR FOOD PREP GLOVES!!!

- 3) Divvy up the peppers into the 2 quart BALL jars without tamping the peppers. Make sure to leave some headroom. If you don't have enough headroom, split the peppers between 3 jars [vii]
- 4) Add distilled water to one of the jars until the peppers are covered or they start to float
- 5) Alternately agitate the peppers with a chop stick and LIGHTLY tamp with the tamper [viii] to get any sneaky air bubble outs. Repeat until you don't see any more air bubbles escaping
- 6) Weigh a 1 qt. measuring cup
- 7) Pour out the water into a mesh strainer over the 1 qt. measuring cup
- 8) Weigh the 1 qt. measuring cup plus water and calculate the weight of the water by subtracting the weight of the measuring cup from Step 6)
- 9) Add 4% brining salt by weight to the water and mix until thoroughly dissolved. Do yourself a favor and use an immersion blender
- 10) Pour the brine back into the jar of peppers
- 11) Alternately agitate the peppers with a chop stick and LIGHTLY tamp with the tamper [viii] to get any sneaky air bubble outs. Repeat until you don't see any more air bubbles escaping.
- 12) Cut off the Ziploc portions of the Ziploc bag. Cut down the side seams then cut in half. This will leave you with 4 plastic followers [iv]
- 13) Place one follower, followed by one weight, followed by one follower, followed by one weight on top of the peppers in the jar [ix, x]
- 14) Screw the Easy Fermenter lids on the jars and pump out the air with the Easy Ferment pump
- 15) Repeat steps 4) - 14) for the remaining jars
- 16) Label the jars and place in the wine cooler at 65 deg. F.
- 17) Ferment for at least 14 days [xi]
- 18) When formation is done, replace the Easy Fermenter lids with the Ball lids and stick in the fridge. They should be good for quite a while.
- 19) These can be eaten as a snack, used as a burger topping, WHATEVER!!! I like to use them in my "Other Wings"
- 20) ENJOY!!!

NOTES

- i. Not 100% necessary as long as you have a cool, dark place to put the peppers while they ferment. The wine coolers make it pretty easy to maintain temperature and not have to worry about fluctuations
- ii. It would not hurt to have an extra one on hand in case you have just a little too many peppers to allow for headroom in the jars, but (Qty. 2) should do the job for 1 lb of peppers. Same goes for the fermentation lids and weights
- iii. There are a variety of options here, but I like the Easy Fermenter brand. The lids have a special little waterless airlock valve that lets CO2 out and prevents air from getting in while keeping a profile no higher than the lid itself. These fit into my wine coolers perfectly

- iv. Non-plastic alternatives are grape leaves, outer cabbage leaves, etc. Fresh grape leaves might be hard to find in most grocery stores, but you should be able to find cabbage
- v. These are a must. If you don't believe me, you will learn. There are various things you DO NOT want to touch after handling and slicing habaneros
- vi. Also not 100% necessary, but it does make mixing the brine easier
- vii. As you may notice from the pictures, I had almost no headroom, so I really violated my own directions here. I decided to go ahead anyways. It remains to be seen whether or not I will be rueing my decision
- viii. Another good reason to leave enough headroom
- ix. This helps keep the peppers under the brine which is one of the, if not the, cardinal rules of lacto-fermentation
- x. Once again, you will notice from the pictures that I did not leave enough head room, so I wound using only one weight and no followers
- xi. The time may be one that you have to experiment with, because it will depend on any number of environmental variables. Since I use the wind coolers, my variables are minimized. I usually see 7 – 10 days recommended with shorter times if your room temperature is on the high side and longer times if your room temperature is on the low side. I have found at least 14 days works for me with the 65 deg. F wine coolers
- xii. There was a little bit of Kahm yeast on the 174144 jar which is harmless by most accounts. The brine smelled OK, so I skimmed the Kahm yeast off and wiped down the upper part of the inside of the jar. A quick taste test was good too!

PICTURES









INITIAL JARRING



AFTER ONE WEEK



AFTER TWO WEEKS [XII]

