This brief work will detail a few highlights of making sauerkraut. Paul Bragg – one of America’s great health pioneers – traveled to the Balkans¹ to learn first-hand about the robust health of these people he had, theretofore, only read of on the written page. While recovering from TB in a Switzerland sanitarium² Paul Bragg found himself intrigued by the writings of a Russian scientist named “Metchkinoff.” Metchkinoff had personally witnessed and logged information about the Balkan peoples; he noted they were all in robust health … and that they often appeared 20 years younger than their actual age; none had need of glasses and none seemed to have any need of a doctor! Men in their 90’s were still fathering children and elderly women retained their youthful beauty. Sound like anyone else we know?³ Metchkinoff attributed this health and vigor to the numerous fermented foods which these people ate: sauerkraut (and other fermented vegetables), sourdough bread, and yogurt. After his full recovery from TB at Dr. Rollier’s sanitarium, Paul Bragg strapped on his backpack and hiked southward some 800+ miles from Switzerland to the Balkans⁴ to visit these people for himself! I will let you read that story yourself as it is best told by the one who experienced it firsthand!

**Basic Sauerkraut Recipe**

We will briefly convey the basic recipe which Paul Bragg shared in his now out-of-print book, *Salt-Free Sauerkraut.*⁵ This is the basic recipe he learned from an elderly couple who make their own kraut high in the Balkan mountains. Both husband and wife were over 100 years old and were still healthy looking and vibrant!

**Ingredients**

- 3-4 heads of cabbage (I can taste a difference between conventionally grown and organically grown cabbage; the latter typically tastes sweeter meaning it has a higher *brick content* and, therefore, has more nutrients overall)
- Approx. 8T of seed mix: celery, dill, caraway
- Pure water
  - (My addition to this recipe calls for 3-4 organic carrots … to be used in “plugging” the top; more on that below.)

**Directions:**

- Before shredding cabbage, pull off and retain 3-4 of the nicer looking outer leaves; these will be used to “cap off” the top of the jar just before the carrots are used.
- Chop and pack shredded cabbage in a 1-gallon, glass jar. Chop on a clean cutting board with a stainless steel knife or food processor. Some people like to pound the cabbage and bruise it with some manner of wooden pestle. I pack it tightly, but seldom do the bruising.
- On top of each 1” layer of cabbage, sprinkle about 1T of whole seeds in between the 1” layers of cabbage. The Balkan recipe Paul Bragg got from the natives there calls for equal amounts of the following seeds: celery, dill, and caraway. Paul taught the seeds could be either ground or left whole. I have tried it both ways and either method works fine. *So why do I now leave the seeds whole?* Leaving the seeds whole starts the *sprouting process* in the seeds before they “drown” and die off. (Poor seeds!) But the enzymes which are produced in the sprouting process *remain* since there is no heat/cooking involved! The sprouting process creates a skyrocketing effect on the level of enzymes in any given seed; this makes an already healthy dish even healthier!

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¹ I estimate this was sometime around the 1930’s.
² The word “sanitarium” was once used to refer to a place where people regained health; at that time, it was not a term which referred to a place where folks went when they had mental disorders.
³ Sarah was at least 90 years old when King Abimelech tried to take her from Abraham! Genesis 17:17; 18:11-14; 20:1-8.
⁴ The modern-day region of Yugoslavia/Bosnia-Herzegovina.
⁵ The book is worth finding … and maybe we should all create a grass-roots uproar with his daughter, Patricia Bragg, for ever pulling such a fine work out of publication in the first place! It almost seems like someone made them stop publishing the work since its profound contents can have such a marked impact on the health of multitudes! The pharmaceutical companies cannot recoup their millions in R&D unless the populace remains sickly.

⁶ The above ingredients are all approximate; depending on how finely the cabbage is processed, one may use more or less cabbage; the amount of seed mix will also vary from person to person.
• Continue filling the jar with 1” layers of cabbage topping each layer with about 1T of the seed mixture.

• Topping off the jar. Most every glass, pickle jar has a small, vertical region which is the same approximate width as the lid. Many will refer to this region as the neck of the jar – this is the part of the jar which juts vertically upward after the jar curves in to go up and meet the lid. This neck is usually about an inch or so tall on most pickle jars. (By the way, I buy pickle jars and toss the pickles just to get the jar for making kraut!) Just where the neck of the jar starts curving outward to the jar’s greatest diameter is where we stop filling with layers of cabbage. It is at this level in the jar (just below the curved lip region) that you should place your whole leaves of cabbage above the top-most layer of shredded cabbage.

Next, the one or two layers of whole leaves are topped off with carrots (cut carrots in half, lengthwise, and cut off either end so each carrot extends across the top and under the lip on both sides to hold everything down. This usually takes 3-5 carrots, with the one across the middle being the longest. You may have to arch/bend the carrot up in the middle to get it to go under the lip of the jar. This can usually be done without breaking the carrot. The carrots should be about an inch from the very top of the jar; it is important to keep them submerged under water for the duration of your fermenting process!

• Now fill the jar with water and let it set at about 77 degrees for 7-10 days. The carrots should be anywhere from ¼” to 1” under the surface of the water. Secure a cheesecloth (or washcloth) over the top with a strong rubber band (air needs to get to the mixture to introduce good bacteria). Check in on your fermentation from time to time to make sure the carrots remain under the water (the mixture tends to absorb a lot of water around the fourth/fifth days and you may need to add water once or twice a day during this time). The kraut juice this yields will taste “official” as will your kraut! [Note: for me, eating these seeds with the kraut (once it is done) just ruins the greatly anticipated “kraut taste.” So I rinse the seeds off before eating the kraut. However, the seeds are quite good if used in making sourdough bread!]

The sky is the limit on this recipe: try carrots, sesame seeds, garlic, onions, broccoli, ginger, lemon juice, dill weed, etc. I have also made it with brown rice, dried corn, wheat berries and rye berries. (The 3 latter grains swell quite a bit and can “push up” the mixture considerably. By the way, in case of overflows, you may wish to set the jar in a flat, glass casserole dish for the duration of the fermentation process!

Once done, I use the lid which came with the jar and refrigerate the entire gallon. Some people like to pack it into smaller jars before refrigerating. This kraut tastes great on/with salads, brown rice, baked potatoes, and whole wheat toast!

**Variations:**
Many different seeds and seasonings can be placed between layers of cabbage:

• Seeds: sesame, millet, rye, wheat, brown rice, fennel, corn, spelt, etc. My current method is to leave seeds whole so as to begin their sprouting process.

• Seasoning options: chopped, fresh mint, dill weed, parsley, dandelion greens, and broccoli greens; chopped, fresh onions, ginger, and garlic. Try variations of each one according to your personal favorites! For a twist on the Kraut Recipe give it a lemon twist! The juice of one or two lemons will add a nice flavor to the recipe. I am also adding some lemon peel and pulp when organic ones are used.

• Vegetables for putting between the layers: chopped carrots, beets, and dried, cayenne pepper!

**Kim-chi**
A fine kim-chi recipe calls for the basic methods given above, but adding many other flavorings

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7 Further study will show that almost every edible seed in existence possesses what are termed nitrilosides by some scientists; these nitrilosides are a family of cyanide compounds which are harmless to normal body cells, but deadly to free radicals in the body! In their raw form, these nitrilosides are connected to an enzyme which prevents them from crossing the cell wall of normal cells! However, the cell walls of abnormal cells (such as cancer cells) allow these cyanide compounds right through and into the cell and … POW! The cyanide kills them! Millet and celery seed appear to be especially high in nitrilosides, and millet is said to retain much of its nitrilolide strength even after it is cooked! And to think that most Americans have been using millet as just bird seed for so many decades! Our Creator has surely provided these seeds for our health and well-being!
and seasonings to make it hot! Below is just one of many possible variations:

*Cabbage; shredded carrots; chopped garlic, ginger, and onions; hot peppers; broccoli; and greens (such as dandelion, dill weed, mint, rosemary, basil, sage and thyme), and lemon juice.*

*Sourdough Bread and Sauerkraut: Living it Up With Sauer-power!*

FOR YOU SOURDOUGH BREAD FANS! Use some of your sauerkraut juice to mix with organic, whole wheat flour to get your sourdough bread starter going! It works great!

**Basic Starter Recipe:**
1C of sauerkraut juice
1C organic, 100% whole wheat, pastry flour

**Directions:**
Place sauerkraut juice and flour in a one-quart, glass jar and mix; cover with cloth and secure with a rubber band; let stand 6-12 hours in a dark place; mix starter in with more flour (approx. 4C) and water (if needed); knead the bread and obtain a dough consistency as though you were about to bake the bread; now let the lump of dough stand (covered with a towel) for another 12-24 hours in a warm place (about 77 degrees is fine). Now roll out the bread and bake in the manner desired; if baked in a bread pan, cook at 350 degrees for about 20-30 minutes (or until done).

Note: if you wish to “carry over” your starter to the next batch of bread, take a small piece of dough and freeze or refrigerate until the next round of bread baking. I suspect the build up of different bacteria in the sourdough starter throughout the year is another thing which can greatly enhance the immune system over time. However, based on Scripture, I would never allow my starter to be used year in and year out indefinitely; throw out the “carryover” and begin a new starter each year after Passover.

**Summary**
Fermented foods are largely missing from the SAD (Standard American Diet) diet. Hence, many people are missing out on those good bacteria which such foods produce and which result in a healthier digestive tract. And if people *do* get an occasional serving of kraut on their plates, it has oftentimes been cooked/heated twice over and, thus, its enzymatic health benefits have been altogether squelched. The key to health-giving enzymes is no heating!

Raw kraut is delicious on salads, brown rice and baked potatoes. The juice can be used in homemade salad dressings and, as indicated, is a great addition to a sourdough starter!

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8 Organic, 100% whole grain bread flours are all I recommend for baking: wheat, spelt, rye, barley, kamut, oat, and teff.