

Everyday Healthy! Everyday Delicious!

From the Kitchen of Janice Feuer Haugen

Kanji — Cultured Beet & Carrot Supertonic

Inspired by and slightly adapted from a recipe from Wardeh Harmon's book

The Complete Idiot's Guide to Fermenting Foods.

This lightly spicy lacto-fermented beverage is a variation on the traditional Northern Indian kanji made from their local black carrots.

The same vegetables make two batches of kanji. Temperature makes a difference in the fermentation time. Taste after two days. During the colder temperatures of winter, you may want to ferment kanji for an additional 12-24 hours to achieve the taste you prefer.

Makes: over ½ gallon between two batches

Active time: 20 minutes

Total time: 4-6 days of fermentation

8 ounces beets, washed, trimmed and cut into ¾-inch dice (1½-1¾ cups)

3½ ounces carrots, washed, trimmed and cut into ½-inch dice (¾-1 cup)

1 Serrano chili, stem removed, halved and cut into 6-8 pieces

¼ teaspoon (or more to taste) Aleppo pepper or other red chile flakes

1 tablespoon whole yellow or brown mustard seeds (brown mustard seeds are spicier)

1½ tablespoons high-quality salt; plus scant ½ tablespoon salt for second batch

¼ cup whey

about 5½ cups water

Batch Number One

1. Place the diced beets and carrots into a half-gallon glass jar. Add the Serrano pepper, Aleppo pepper flakes, mustard seeds, salt and whey. Add the water, leaving one-inch of air space between the top of the water and the top of the jar. Tightly cover the jar. Ferment the kanji for 2-3 days at room temperature.
2. Strain out one quart of the liquid into a quart jar leaving behind the solid ingredients with the remaining liquid. Cover the quart jar and refrigerate it. This kanji is now ready to drink.

Batch Number Two

1. Add a scant ½ tablespoon of salt to the remaining ingredients. Fill the jar with water. Again leave one-inch of air space between the top of the water and the top of the jar. Tightly cover the jar. Ferment the kanji for another 2-3 days at room temperature.
2. Strain the liquid into two quart jars. I like to combine the two batches and then fill my jars. Cover the jars and refrigerate the kanji.
3. Discard or compost the solid ingredients. Though some people say they eat the vegetables. To me they seem to have given their all to the making of the kanji.

Note: Wardeh suggests substituting kanji from a previous batch for the whey when you next prepare a fresh batch of kanji.