

Kim Chee

Kim Chee is a pickled salad/condiment type food served at virtually every Korean meal. It is often compared to saurkraut. It can be made not only with nappa cabbage, but with types of raddishes, greens, or cucumbers. It is salty, (spicy) hot, temperately cold, garlicy and tangy.

THERE ARE THREE MAJOR STEPS TO MAKING KIM CHEE:

1. Salting the cabbage
2. Making the pepper paste/sauce.
3. Combining the pepper with the cabbage and putting it into jars.

YOU WILL NEED:

- 1/2-1 c pickling salt
- 1 ea Head Nappa Cabbage
- 1 ea daikon raddish (one third to one half the size of the cabbage)
- 1 ea head of garlic, minced
- 1-2 Tb ginger, minced
- 2-8 Tb Korean red pepper flakes, or fresh hot red pepper to taste, or a combination.
- 2 ea green onions, julienned
- 1 tb sugar
- X A new pair of latex gloves are handy for handling hot pepper
- X A large bowl for soaking the cabbage in brine solution.
- X Large glass containers to put the finished kim chee into.
- X Especially handy for large batches is a food processor and/or a contraption for shredding vegetables into julienne strips.

DIRECTIONS:

First, the cabbage must be salted in brine solution.

Cut the cabbage in half lengthwise.

Then cut a second time lengthwise to form quarter cabbage chunks.

Mix the salt with enough water to cover all the cabbage in a large bowl.

Soak the cabbage in the brine solution, making sure that all parts are submerged.

If they are not, you can restack the cabbage half way through the soaking process, moving bottom chunks to the top, and vice versa.

Leave the cabbage for 2-4 hours.

At the end of this time, the cabbage should be wilted, supple, limp and salty in taste.

(optional: A trick from my grandmother is to lightly salt each stalk of each leaf which is much thicker than the leafy part in order that the leafy part and stalk are evenly seasoned. So to do this you must rub pickling salt sparsely on each of the stalks. This is done midway through the soaking when the leaves are manageable wilted.)

Reserve some of the brine solution.

Rinse the cabbage and then cut into bite size pieces about an inch and a half long and drain the cabbage.

Discard the centre core.

In the mean time, prepare the daikon raddish and the pepper sauce/paste.

The daikon must either be shredded into julienne strips.

Add to the daikon: red pepper flakes, red pepper, minced garlic, minced ginger, julienned green onion, salt to taste (1 Tbsp) and sugar, then toss. If you are using your hands, beware of the the hot pepper. This is where gloves come in handy.

Finally, thoroughly mix the pepper mixture with the cabbage by tossing.

Then check for salt and red pepper and seasoning in general and adjust if necessary.

Then pack into glass jars.

The mixture should have a liquid sauce in the jar and more will form as it sits.

It is important that the mixture is in a sauce.

Should you need to add more liquid, take some reserved brine and rinse the final mixing bowl and add to bottles so that all the cabbage pieces are just submerged in liquid.

You can keep a bottle outside for a day to help it ripen more quickly, otherwise store in the refrigerator, tightly capped.

The taste changes as it ripens. It is initially like a salad and then ferments to taste more sour. Kim chee compliments meals served with rice. It is a Korean staple. It is also good fried with butter or sesame oil, or stir fried with pork and tofu.