



Food Preservation Series: Course 1 Fermenting with Michelle Dohrn

About Michelle - a skilled wildlife biologist, she specializes in native butterflies and habitat demonstration gardens. She is the mother of one daughter and has ties to the native ancestry of this land. Michelle regularly conducts food workshops in her home and at local events in the tri-counties, as well as maintains a native and edible garden with chickens and worm composting. And as if life wasn't busy enough, she is also the founder of the Ojai Food Co-op start-up.

Michelle's passion is to empower people to cook, preserve and ferment in-season vegetables and fruit to help aid in digestion, increase the nutrition of the food; along with preserving the bounty of local produce we receive living in Southern California. It is her intention to reignite the connection we once had with the land, animals and the microorganism that live all around us. She does this by making homemade sauerkraut, pickles, kimchi, green beans, beets, salsa, ketchup, kombucha, mead, ginger ale, ginger beer, root beer, fruit soda. You can ask her advice on how easy and rewarding homesteading can be!

Fermenting Vegetables – Pickles, Sauerkraut and Kimchi

Fermentation has been going on for a long time in our history and culture. It requires almost no work on the part of the maker. It is naturally made by bacteria breaking down sugars into lactic acid, carbon dioxide and a little amount of alcohol. Because vegetables like cucumbers and cabbage contain water, sugar, proteins, minerals and many nutrients it makes them perfect for all types of beneficial flora bacteria to grow and thus aid in easy, energy efficient digestion and greater immunity through a more diverse gut ecology, plus they are crunchy and delicious! This is how our ancestors ate for hundreds of years without the need of refrigeration. Fermentation happens naturally as long as food is kept at around 65 F. Bacterial growth is controlled by washing our hands and the containers that hold the ferments, as well as applying salts and eliminating oxygen into their closed environment.

Probiotic Drinks – Ginger Ale, Root Beer and Fruit Sodas

The wonderful world of naturally fermented sodas is probiotically rich, effervescent, delicious and beautiful to behold. Kids when given a REAL root beer float are blown away by the taste and sweet effervescence. Food should be fun, health promoting and a joy to put into our body. That's what naturally fermented sodas are . . . joy in a bottle!

So, what makes a naturally fermented soda bubble in the bottle? That would be the starter of your choice – whey, water kefir, kombucha, ginger bug or something else. The end result is about creating a tingle on the tongue and strong bio-diverse gut ecology!

Start maturing your own ginger bug at this workshop. Share or ask any questions when you come into class and we'll all help each other. I will teach you when your ginger bug will be ready to work for you and the infinite soda possibilities you can create!