



Wildcrafted Fermentation

Exploring, Transforming, and Preserving
the Wild Flavors of Your Local Terroir

Pascal Baudar

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“ [Baudar’s] methods, ideas, and aesthetics . . . are truly inspirational.”

—**SANDOR KATZ**, *New York Times* bestselling author
of *The Art of Fermentation*

A delicious journey into the lacto-fermentation universe of common wild edibles

Plant-based lacto-fermentation has been used for thousands of years by different cultures around the world. It’s the easiest and safest way to preserve food, and nature provides all the necessary ingredients: plants, salt, and the beneficial lactic acid bacteria found everywhere. Every landscape is unique, so the creative possibilities are endless.

In *Wildcrafted Fermentation*, culinary alchemist Pascal Baudar (*The New Wildcrafted Cuisine* and *The Wildcrafting Brewer*) describes in detail how to create delicious lacto-ferments at home from the wild and cultivated plants in your local landscape or garden. From sauerkrauts and kimchis to savory pastes and dehydrated spice blends, Baudar includes more than 100 easy-to-follow recipes (sample recipes attached). Step-by-step photos illustrate gathering, preparation, and fermentation techniques for different kinds of plants that will change your relationship to the edible landscape.

So much more than a cookbook, *Wildcrafted Fermentation* offers a deeply rewarding way to reconnect with the land through the greens, stems, roots, berries, fruits, and seeds of your local terroir and, as Baudar puts it, “create a cuisine unique to you and your local environment.”

To request a review copy or author interview, please contact: Christina Butt at cbutt@chelseagreen.com or (802) 295-6300 ext. 127
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Pascal Baudar is a wild food researcher and instructor in traditional food preservation techniques. He has introduced thousands of home cooks, chefs, and foodies to the flavors offered by their wild landscapes. In 2014, he was named one of the most influential tastemakers by Los Angeles Magazine. Find out more about his classes and workshops at urbanoutdoorskills.com.

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Exploring Local and Ethnic Flavors

There are many ways you can bring your ferments to the next level by wildcrafting aromatic plants such as sages, making your own spice blends, and mixing wild and regular savory herbs, berries, and seeds to explore local or ethnic flavors. Let's explore some possibilities.

Fermenting with Spice Blends

A few years back I had no idea how to make my own spice blend. Like most people I would purchase my favorite ones at the store, but it never occurred to me that the process was quite simple.

I mean, it's not that obvious: You basically purchase some colored powder or odd mix of herby bits and it makes food taste great. It's quite magical! Somehow I had the (mis)conception that creating this magic powder was a very esoteric process requiring some sort of obscure knowledge, huge amounts of herbal enlightenment, possibly incantations and a master's degree from the Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry.

It wasn't until I started researching and making my own spice blends using local wild herbs and aromatic seeds that I understood how simple the process can be. I also learned that, with a bit of practice and experimentation, you can create blends much more delicious than whatever you can purchase at the store. The reason is quite simple: By making your own blends, you can adjust the ingredients to your own taste buds, and with practice it becomes a highly intuitive endeavor based on your savory preferences.

That said, I'm not saying that you *must* absolutely make your own blends. There are quite a few wonderful commercial blends out there! Some are so delicious that I'm still trying to deconstruct them, which isn't always an easy task (maybe they do use incantations!).

Being active in several online fermenting groups, I think not enough fermenters are taking advantage of the possibilities. A good blend can

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BARBECUE SPICE BLEND

I'm sure you already have some of the ingredients for this at home. Go open the cabinet; if you like cooking you should already have some chili flakes, brown sugar, garlic granules, and peppercorns. Take note of what you're missing, and the next time you go to the store (which should be right now), purchase the rest. By the way, ethnic markets are the best locations to find more spices than you'll ever be able to make savory blends with. The selection in regular all-American supermarket is pretty slim and, dare I say, boring. I'm lucky to have Middle Eastern, Indian, and Hispanic stores nearby. One of them has a full aisle dedicated to spices. Some are so obscure; I don't even know what they are and what to do with them. Purchasing online is another good option.

Ingredients for 2½ tablespoons (about 20 g)

1 tablespoon (6.5 g) paprika powder
1 teaspoon (3 g) chile morita powder (smoked jalapeños) or smoked chipotle powder
½ teaspoon (1.5 g) ground peppercorns
½ teaspoon (1.5 g) garlic granules or powder
½ teaspoon (1.5 g) onion powder
½ teaspoon (1.5 g) ginger powder
1 teaspoon (4 g) brown sugar

Procedure

All you need to do is mix everything together in a bowl with a fork or spoon. I like to use a wooden grinder to really mix the ingredients. Simple, isn't it? We'll use this blend in the next recipe. The recipe doesn't include salt; you'll add that when you're mixing the ingredients to be fermented.

Interested in personalizing the blend? Instead of smoked chipotle powder, you could use a regular chili powder or flakes, but add smoked paprika powder instead of regular paprika powder. That way, you'll keep the wonderful smoky flavors that many barbecue blends have. Heck, you can even skip any smoked powders but add a bit of liquid smoke in the ferment itself. If you love garlic or ginger, by all means double the amount.



Fermenting Tender Stems

When wildcrafting and preparing food, stems are often forgotten. It's too bad, because some stems are quite delicious and crunchy if foraged at the right time. Some, like dandelion stems, can be quite challenging (I'm not a fan), but I love using the tender stems of our local mustards, which taste like broccoli once cooked. Watercress has interesting stems, too; when cooked they are very tender, and if you make WaterKraut (watercress sauerkraut) with the leaves, you can save the stems and ferment them, too.

FERMENTED WATERCRESS STEMS

This recipe is really a take on a Korean recipe (*namul*). The stems are placed in boiling water for about 30 seconds, then put in ice water. Remove and drain in a colander, then squeeze the watercress with your hands to remove excess water and cut it in 1- to 2-inch (2.5–5 cm) pieces. It's served with garlic, soy sauce, roasted sesame seeds, and sesame oil.

But if you think about it, all the ingredients for a ferment are there, and the soy sauce can replace the salt. All that's missing are the lacto bacteria, which have been destroyed during the boiling process. It's easy enough to add some active sauerkraut juice, though.

Ingredients for a ½-pint jar (236 ml)

6 ounces (170 g) watercress stems, cooked
2–3 cloves garlic, crudely chopped
½ teaspoon (2.5 ml) soy sauce
½ teaspoon toasted sesame oil
½ tablespoons Culture Starter
½ teaspoon chili flakes, spicy or not (optional: you can also sprinkle some on when you serve)

Procedure

1. Cook the stems as explained above. Place everything into a bowl and mix with your hands for a few seconds, then transfer the contents to a ½-pint jar. The jar will be around 80 percent full.
2. Use fermentation method 3 (page XXXX). Close the lid and monitor the pressure by pressing the top. Burp as necessary. Shake the jar two or three times a day. As the ingredients ferment and become acidic, the shaking ensures that everything is fermenting properly and you won't get mold. Ferment for around 7 to 10 days; when the fermentation gases stop, place in the fridge for aging. I like to eat this ferment quite young.

