



GOT SLIMY FERMENTS?

Every once in a while you might find that you get a 'slimy' batch of ferments. While it doesn't happen too often, you'll want to know how to prevent it for next time. In the winter the fermentation process can be a bit more 'uneven' being that it is colder in the house -and then alternating warm and cold as we turn the heat up and down (this may alter the bacteria ratios that predominate during the fermentation process).

4 Reasons your cultured veggies might turn slimy:

- 1) Not enough salt (salt inhibits the bacteria strains that we don't want from predominating).
- 2) One of the bacteria's that cultures veggies is a slime producing one, the veggie's indigenous bacteria undergoes a natural succession: first coliform bacteria are favored, then the slimy *Leuconostoc* are favored, and finally the lactic acid bacteria such as *Lactobacilli* predominate and essentially eliminate the coliforms and *Leuconostoc*.
- 3) There are some strains in whey that can make slime too.
- 4) *Lb. planterum* can also make kraut slimy.

Here are your choices when you get one of those rare slimy ferments:

- 1) The best thing to do with slimy ferments is put it back in the fridge and let it ferment for a few more weeks and see if the slime is gone. Over time, some people have found that as the lactic acid bacteria predominate, the slime goes away.
- 2) Others just rinse the slime off the veggies (your ferment is not considered bad from a microbial standpoint).

Here is what to do to prevent slimy ferments:

- 1) If you want to use less salt, maybe next time put a little lemon juice or unpasteurized apple cider vinegar in there to prevent the slime promoting bacteria from predominating when you use less salt. Try the juice of half a lemon or 2 Tbsp of unpasteurized apple cider vinegar. The strains of bacteria that we really want, thrive in that acid medium (lactic acid fermentation).

According to one microbial textbook, slimy kraut has never been thoroughly investigated so we are left to



trial and error, but it is not necessarily "bad" for us (although you may find it too gross to eat and want to compost it-to each his own!)

What about Kefir Water?

Yes, sometimes Kefir Water can turn slimy too.

How to prevent your Kefir Water from turning slimy:

- 1) Keep a quarter cup of the sour kefir from a past batch and add it to your new batch when you start it, to make sure that the environment isn't promoting the slime producing bacteria to predominate (or use 1/4 cup of apple cider vinegar if you are just getting started with new grains).
- 2) One thing we've noticed is that this seems to happen more often with RO or distilled or 'dead water', kefir grains love spring water and tap water (and we trust that they bio transform the chlorine).