

” The biological reality – that bacteria are our ancestors and the context for all life; that they perform many important physiological functions for us; and that they improve, preserve, and protect our food – contrasts sharply with the widespread perception of bacteria as our enemies.

Sandor Katz, *The Art of Fermentation*



# MIGHTY MICROBES

It's a little strange to say fermented food is the latest greatest new discovery in food health because actually, before canning and refrigeration we used to eat it all the time as a standard pantry item. Perhaps we didn't really realize the full extent of how amazingly beneficial these foods are. To delve deeper into fermented food I met with Bogden and Karin Rose, avid researchers, farmers, and pioneers of the movement back to clean food with high integrity. After an afternoon with them, I couldn't help wondering whether fermented food really is the answer to boundless energy and optimal health.

**T**his extraordinary couple have 10 children, all of whom are home schooled, they live on a farm in the Western Cape, home grow the majority of ingredients they use in their recipes and still have time to drive into town for a meeting that left me energized and inspired. Their journey started when, after a period of ill health, they turned to diet as a healing intervention. They stopped dairy and meat and started eating organic wholefoods. Even so, they didn't feel as substantial an improvement as they wanted and couldn't work out why they didn't have more energy.

**They started experimenting and found the mineral content of the vegetables available to us alarmingly low. There aren't a lot of truly healthy options available on shelf, especially if your system is sensitive. Most food has added chemicals, preservatives, sugar or other worrying factors like GM contamination. They decided the only way they could trust the food they consume is to grow it themselves. Properly cultivated soil with high mineral content is absolutely key to creating nourishing food. "Take a handful of soil from our garden", says Bogden, and it's so healthy, it's full of worms and good bacteria."**

charge. Alkaline minerals have a greater capacity to absorb electrons. When our pH is off we compromise this capacity." Fermented food enhances the absorption and adds more minerals. Microbes make your food easier to digest, and we end up eating less because the bio-availability is greater. Our bodies register all the good nutrients and stop sending hunger signals. Bacteria, specifically L-plantarum, present on the vegetables starts off the fermentation process, then airborne bacteria adds to the result. Chemically treated, or fertilized crops have less L-plantarum which affects the quality of the end products. This is another reason the Rose family grows as much of their own product as they can. If they run short, they source the very best organic produce or the highest quality bio-friendly alternatives.

After eating vegetables grown in high quality soil without growth accelerators or chemicals they had a completely different energy level and experience of health.

"The level of fatigue and amount of ailments that most people experience is unnecessary says Karin, whom I can't help being in awe of. She's a woman that gave birth to her last child on an exercise mat in front of the fire at home, then handed him to his father and promptly got up to go and make tea.

That morning Bogden had raw kimchi soup with spinach, broccoli and cashews, two dill cucumbers and some dehydrated seed crackers. By 4pm he was still full of energy and going strong. Some say food like sauerkraut is an acquired taste or at least something you have to get used to while others find fermented food absolutely delicious. Regardless of taste, it's all about the bacteria.

"Basically", explains Bogden, "we are electrical, our bodies are like capacitors, with the capacity to absorb and hold

We seem to have embraced a 'war on bacteria' when most bacteria protect us from the few that can make us sick.



## did you know?

*During fermentation food is exposed to bacteria and yeasts, either through a culture or naturally through the air. Fermentation pre-digests foods and makes nutrients more bioavailable. It also produces beneficial microorganisms that help with digestion, strengthen the immune system and guard against bacteria and infection.*



Continuous indiscriminate killing of bacteria in, on and around our bodies makes us more vulnerable to infection rather than less vulnerable.

About 70% of our immune system is in the gut. More than what we eat, it is how we digest that counts.

If the immune system is compromised in any way, our supply of beneficial bacteria can dwindle and leave the body vulnerable to infection, viruses and toxins.

## FERMENTED FOODS

Probiotic foods like kimchi, tempeh, miso, kombucha and sauerkraut are filled with good bacteria that activate the nutrients your body needs, nourishing it with healthy, beneficial organisms. Besides the health benefits, fermented food creates interesting flavours, textures, and smells without the use of chemicals, preservatives or harmful ingredients. These are just some of the more common fermented foods eaten for their health benefits.

**Kombucha** is a beverage that originates in Asia. It's made from a blend of yeasts, bacteria and sweetened tea which leaves a lightly carbonated result.

**Kvas** is popular in Russia and made from fermented rye. It is carbonated with a negligible alcohol content and sometimes flavoured with fruit.

**Rejuvelac** is known as a health tonic. This naturally carbonated drink full of enzymes is somewhat sour and is made from soaking wheat berries in spring water.

**Miso** is made when you mix rice, barley or soybeans with a certain mould and age it in a wooden cask. It's a paste commonly used in Japan to flavour many different dishes.

**Tempeh** comes from Indonesia and is a type of soy bean cake that's been fermented with Rhizopus mould.

**Kimchi** is made by mixing fresh vegetables with salt then packing them in an airtight container, the bacteria naturally present on the veggies creates a type of vinegar that creates a healthy bacterial environment.

**Sauerkraut** needs cabbage and salt, fermented over about 3 to 4 weeks. Fermentation by lactobacilli is introduced naturally and biologically, as the air-borne bacteria culture on raw cabbage leaves.

**Yoghurt** is made when a culture of souring bacteria is added to milk from a cow or goat.

## GET THE BENEFITS

Fermented foods boost immunity and can change your health in a dramatic way. For maximum benefit, eat a small amount frequently. That means have a tablespoon or two with one or two of your meals daily. If you prefer a beverage like kefir or kombucha, a few sips or half a cup is enough to benefit you. It helps balance stomach acid, increases digestion, and protects against pathogens.

### ..... ACID BALANCE .....

As we get older, we produce fewer digestive juices and enzymes. Food like sauerkraut, yoghurt and pickled vegetables can compensate for this. When hydrochloric acid in the stomach is low, fermented food helps increase gastric juice acidity. When there's too much acid, it helps protect the stomach and intestinal lining.

### ..... EASY DIGESTION .....

Organic compounds are metabolised into more elemental forms, minerals become more bio-available and difficult to digest compounds are broken down. Carbohydrates in fermented food are broken down and pre-digested. This is particularly good for people with diabetes.

## BRAND NEW IN STORE

We are so excited to have a brand new range of fermented food in the Wellness Warehouse store at Kloof street, especially when we know exactly where it comes from. The Rose range of food has been prepared at the Rose family farm farm near Greyton. 🌿

