



Live Farm Fresh, Without the Farm

## **Living Homegrown Podcast Episode #06 Interview with Karen Diggs of Kraut Source**

**Show Notes: [www.LivingHomegrown.com/06](http://www.LivingHomegrown.com/06)**

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**Announcer: Welcome to the Living Homegrown Podcast, where it's all about how to live farm fresh, without the farm. To help guide the way to a more flavourful and sustainable lifestyle is your host, national PBS TV producer and canning expert Theresa Loe.**

**Theresa:** Hi everybody and welcome to another episode of the Living Homegrown Podcast. I'm so glad you're here! This podcast is about living farm fresh without the farm and that just means living a more flavorful lifestyle through artisan food crafts like canning, preserving, fermenting and also through growing your own delicious, organic food no matter how small your garden space.

I am Theresa Loe, the founder of the Canning Academy. I am also the canning expert and co-executive producer on the gardening television series: Growing A Greener World on PBS.

Now if you want to learn more about this podcast series or my background, you can check out episode 00 of the podcast. It's kind of like an audio version of an about me page or you can visit my website [LivingHomegrown.com](http://LivingHomegrown.com).

Now today's episode is on lacto-fermentation and that just happens to be one of the oldest forms of food preservation there is. And it's also a really healthy way to add "good" bacteria into your diet. I have a guest expert on the show today that I interview and she is going to give us the low down on why we would even want to ferment foods.

And she is also the designer of a really handy new fermentation tool that I've been using and I use it to make small batch fermentation. It just makes the whole process easier and faster and I really love it. So that's why I wanted to have her on the show so she could tell you guys all about it.

I am also going to have her explain step by step how to make one of the most commonly fermented foods – and that is sauerkraut. So you'll get all the steps for making sauerkraut.

But before I get to the interview, I kind of wanted to explain what we're talking about when we say lacto-fermentation.

You see, there's lots of different ways you can ferment food. And you're probably familiar with things like a yeast ferment – like beer or sourdough bread. In those instances, a yeast is added to mix and it does all the work.

But with lacto fermentation, a lactic acid bacteria does all the work. And this bacteria, it converts the sugars and starch of the food into lactic acid.

Now that lactic acid not only preserves the food, (makes it last longer while it sits out at room temperature) but it also creates a pH level that makes the food more delicious and more nutritious. It just creates an environment where good – or health benefitting - bacteria can grow.

Now you're probably familiar with lacto-fermented foods and you didn't even realize it. Things like Dairy products like yogurt are lacto-fermented. Also things like sauerkraut and kimchi are also fermented.

But with lacto-fermentation, you can also ferment all different kinds of vegetables: things like carrots, and beets, and peppers, and garlic,

and even a mixture of all of the above. And when you do it with cabbage, you get sauerkraut.

So the thing to remember with lacto-fermentation is that you're doing all of this at room temperature on your counter top. And that's the thing that kind of gets people.

The whole idea of setting a crock of vegetables or a jar of vegetables on the counter, unrefrigerated for days or even weeks...well, it just kind of goes against everything we have ever learned about food safety. And I totally get that.

But I can assure you that lacto-fermentation is very safe and it's a very easy and fun thing to do and here's why...

You are going to be using a brine (or a salt solution) to start that fermentation and that salt keeps the mixture safe from dangerous bacteria. The lactic bacteria can handle the salty environment – but the bad bacteria can't.

Then, the lactic bacteria that is either naturally on the vegetables or you add yourself, starts to make the conversion and that salt water is converted to a more acid pH level and that makes it even safer.

The flavor of the food changes during this process. So it just more delicious and it also becomes easier for your body to digest.

So in today's podcast, we just keep it really simple and we discuss fermentation that only involves a salt brine and vegetables. But I just wanted you to know that this is really just the beginning and you can experiment with all sorts of flavors by adding different spices and different vegetable combinations. It can really be the starting point for a whole new world for you.

So let me get started by telling you all about the guest I have today. Her name is Karen Diggs. She is a certified nutritionalist, a chef and a food writer.

She teaches nutrition and culinary classes at Bauman College in Berkley, CA and she is also the founder of Kraut Source. Now Kraut Source is this really awesome home fermentation tool that lets you easily ferment food on your kitchen countertop using an ordinary mason jar.

Now I first learned about Kraut Source when she was having her Kick Starter campaign and it immediately caught my attention because first of all it's using a mason jar so it looks really neat sitting on the counter. But it allows you to do ferments in small batches and that really caught my attention because I don't usually like to make giant batches of fermented food I like to do smaller batches and be able to experiment with just different flavourings. I really thought it was great and I participated in the Kick Starter and now she's up and running and actually selling these tools from her website. I love mine so much I really wanted you guys to learn all about it too.

So here's my interview with Karen...

**Theresa:** Thank you Karen so much for joining me today.

**Karen:** Oh you're very welcome Theresa. It's my pleasure. I am very excited to talk about fermentation.

**Theresa:** [laughs] I know you are always excited to talk about fermentation.

**Karen:** [laughs] Yes.

**Theresa:** So there is a really big buzz right now as you know around fermentation. And I thought maybe we should start with you just

explaining the type of fermentation that you teach about. What is it that you teach?

**Karen:** Okay well my background is I'm a classically trained chef and now I'm also teaching nutrition. So I teach a combination of holistic, organic cooking, but it's coupled with practice of really sound, traditional nutrition. And part of that is incorporating fermented foods because all of our ancestors, it doesn't matter which country we came from, all of our parents maybe not parents, but grandparents and great grandparents and ancestors all had different types of fermentation. And now modern science is actually discovering that indeed fermented foods hold a lot of great health benefits one of which is probiotics which we know is another big buzz word right now.

**Theresa:** Oh yeah. Fermentation is really a very old, old practice. It's been around forever.

**Karen:** Yes.

**Theresa:** How did you get into this?

**Karen:** You know that's a good question. As I mentioned I had been a chef for many years and it wasn't until I went back to school to study nutrition that I appreciated the health properties of fermented foods. As a child I was born in Hong Kong and from an Asian background there were a lot of fermented foods that I encountered as a child. But I didn't really like the flavour of some of them for one. And the second, I had no idea that it really was so good for your digestion. So when I went back to school to study nutrition I discovered there is a gold mine of taking the idea of food as medicine to a different level. Because fermented foods it helps with our immune system. It also helps to make foods taste better because the profile of fermented foods are very interesting, very tantalizing for the taste buds.

**Theresa:** Yes. So you've gotten into it not only from a chef side but also from the nutrition side. And you're absolutely right it kind of opens up a whole new world.

**Karen:** Yes, absolutely. I was growing up I mean of course I've been to New York and had hot dogs with sauerkraut and sandwiches with pickles and things like that. And to be really honest it wasn't a taste profile that I really appreciated. But I think as I developed my taste palette as a chef and tasted many, many things when I started making sauerkraut and other fermented vegetables and fruits and beverages, I really appreciated the depth of flavor that develops when you ferment foods. Very different from just eating the fruit or vegetable fresh. And then also how it compliments other foods that you would serve at a meal.

**Theresa:** Yes, I agree 100%. So what are some of the fermented foods that we're talking about here? Besides, sauerkraut, what other things are we talking about?

**Karen:** I love to make pickles. I call it real pickles because it's truly fermented rather than adding vinegar or sugar to the pickles.

**Theresa:** So it's not a quick pickle.

**Karen:** No it's not a quick pickle. What I call real pickles.

**Theresa:** Yeah exactly.

**Karen:** I've even done different types of fruits but although with fruit you have to be careful because of the sugar content, it can very quickly turn into alcohol although that may not be a problem for many people. [laughs]

**Theresa:** Not a problem over here! [laughs]

**Karen:** For instance last Thanksgiving I developed a really great recipe using persimmons and then also cranberries. So it was like a relish but then it had the added benefit of the lacto-fermentation so then it had probiotic in it in addition to the nice flavors which are inherent in the fruits anyway when they are in season.

**Theresa:** That sounds really good. So when you mention the probiotics I know you on your website you have an article the 10 healthy reasons to eat lacto-fermented food and probiotics is a big part of that. And we don't have time to go into all 10, but explain about some of the reasons why you think it's healthy to eat fermented food.

**Karen:** Okay well I think the most important thing is as I've mentioned is digestion. And to just go into that a little deeper, when you eat a fermented vegetable like sauerkraut or real pickles or even a fermented chutney, with a meal you actually improve your digestive capacity and by that I mean that you make your hydrochloric acid or digestive juices stronger. So that you can pull apart the protein or fat or carbohydrates in the meal and when you can pull them apart more efficiently you take in the minerals and vitamins that are inherent in the food. Whereas if you had faulty digestion, you could be eating the most delicious organic meal but you're not able to... your body cannot really utilize the nutrients in that meal. So that really is a key point.

The second point about fermented foods is as we mentioned are the probiotics. People are taking all kinds of probiotic supplements but really the best way to get it is through food. And we can get it through vegetables that are lacto-fermented or yogurt that have live cultures in them. So the probiotics are very important to keep bad bacteria in our digestive system at bay and to help the good bacteria proliferate. So that's another benefit. And another less known benefit of fermented vegetables is that it gives us vitamin K. Which is really important for calcium metabolism and also for good skin health for

collagen building. So there are other vitamins, especially vitamin C and the B vitamins which are amplified when you make fermented vegetables.

**Theresa:** I did not know about the vitamin K. That is really interesting. And so what it does is make your system, your digestive system work more efficiently.

**Karen:** Right.

**Theresa:** So one of the ways that I met you was through your Kraut Source Kick Starter. And I absolutely love this tool and I was part of your Kick Starter campaign and your whole start up. It's just this really great tool that I think so many people would enjoy because well first of all everybody loves using a mason jar for anything.

**Karen:** Yes!

**Theresa:** [laughs] And it's the perfect size for doing these smaller batches of fermentation. So I would like you to first tell everybody what the Kraut Source is and how did you come up with the idea?

**Karen:** Okay, well first of all, thank you for supporting our Kick Starter campaign. So I've been fermenting for awhile. Almost 15 years now I guess. And I started the traditional way I guess using these really big and heavy ceramic crocks. And because they are big and heavy you need to chop up a lot of cabbage. Anywhere between 6 and 10 lbs of cabbage to fit into these crocks. And I love using them because it's just like, I'm like wow, this is like really genuine old country style [laughs].

And I bought ones from you know from Germany, from China. I think I even had one from Korea. And they were all pretty much similar. The one that I got from Germany and one from China actually had a little moat or well around the top. So it's a little ring that you can fill the water with and then you would cap it. So what that did was the water

ring around the top keeps the oxygen from going into your fermentation. And then while the vegetables are fermenting, they also produce CO<sub>2</sub> or carbon dioxide. So it would allow the carbon dioxide to escape through the water. And I thought, wow, this is such a brilliant, simple idea. Oxygen can't penetrate the water, but because since it's not a sealed system whatever gases are produced that need to escape to escape can escape.

**Theresa:** Right so nothing explodes [laughs].

**Karen:** [laughs] Right so nothing explodes! As an aside for some of the people who are fermenting, who have fermented you know that sometimes things can explode because all the gases build up because they have nowhere to go. That's definitely happened to me. So I'm looking at this you know this very clever and elegant design and thought you know it would be so great if I can shrink it down to fit onto a mason jar. Because that way you can make a small batch. And it might encourage people who have very small families or if you're a single person not to be intimidated by the process of fermentation. So I was taking a shower and the idea came to me. [laughs] And you know I and I have to confess I used to take long showers not anymore because we're in California, we're in a drought.

**Theresa:** Well they say you get the best ideas in the shower! We should all have little pads of paper and plastic paper and a pen. But yes, I totally get it. [laughs]

**Karen:** So the idea came to me and very fortunately I have a friend who is a product designer and engineer. So he was able to help me make 3D modules using cad drawings and 3D printing.

**Theresa:** You found a small one at Chinatown or something I remember.

**Karen:** I did yes, I walked down to Chinatown, there's a great kitchen supply there and it was one made of out of glass. And it was smaller but when I say small you would still have to chop up 2 lbs of cabbage.

**Theresa:** Okay so not that small!

**Karen:** Not that small. So the other thing too it was made of glass. And although it was very beautiful it was quite delicate. And then the other thing that these systems also need is so I mentioned that you need to keep your fermentation free from excess oxygen going in. And the ability of the gases to escape. The second thing that is really critical is you need to keep all of the vegetables submerged underneath the brine or the liquid. So some of these systems had that they would have a very heavy ceramic disc that you can put into the croc. But the one I bought from Chinatown didn't so I had to kind of devise my own way to keep everything submerged. So that's the other thing about the Kraut Source that I thought of is we also have a little spring mechanism that will keep everything submerged while the little moat that sits on top of the mason jar has the capacity to create that water seal.

**Theresa:** You can use more than one sized jar. Wide mouthed, it has to be a wide mouthed jar but it can be different volumes is that correct?

**Karen:** Correct, yes correct. It can be any sized wide mouthed mason jar. But you wouldn't want to use a tiny, tiny one. It wouldn't.

**Theresa:** It wouldn't work.

**Karen:** Yeah, quart sized is the one I use the most. And the pint sized you can also use. So I use the pint, the quart, and there's also the half gallon size that can also be used too. And I usually do the half gallon for pickles.

**Theresa:** ohhh, okay. So you can use the half gallon size.

**Karen:** Yes, yeah.

**Theresa:** Okay, great. If anyone is having trouble picturing the how we're describing this or how Karen's describing this I will have information and photos and links on the show notes for this episode. And it'll be at [LivingHomegrown.com/06](http://LivingHomegrown.com/06) and everything will be right there including how you can get the Kraut Source.

**Karen:** Right yeah if people go to [KrautSource.com](http://KrautSource.com) they can actually purchase online now. And I'm slowly, slow moving into stores but I am really you know because fermentation and the whole idea of the DIY homegrown movement as you know is really encouraging people to look at sustainability, to look at our carbon footprint, so I'm looking at packaging that's totally green, even plantable. There will be seeds planted into one of the sections in the box. So before I bring it to the stores I want to make sure that I don't include any plastic or anything that's not compostable.

**Theresa:** That's going to be cool!

**Karen:** Yes, I'm moving kind of slowly to get it into stores because I just want to have that in place first before I start putting things on the shelf.

**Theresa:** Yeah, okay. That's fantastic. So we take our large mason jar. Our wide mouthed mason jar. And we put whatever we're going to be fermenting in it and we pack it down a little bit and then you can add your brine and then we add the spring that you were talking about that kind of pushes it down below the brine. And we attach the lid to the mason jar, the ring, which kind of holds it in place. And then you add water to the top and...

**Karen:** Right, yeah you just add plain water to the little moat or well that's on the top. And then there's a cap that comes with it and you just cap it. And then you keep it on your kitchen counter or wherever it's away from direct sunlight. And in an area ideally that is fairly cool so temperature for fermentation the ideal would be around 70-75 degrees Fahrenheit.

**Theresa:** Okay, so room temperature unless you're in a really hot summer. Which just makes it go faster really if it gets

**Karen:** Yeah. I was going to say don't let the temperature deter you from trying the fermentation. As you said if the temperature is warmer then it's just going to go a little quicker. Even better! Yeah if it's very very cold then it's just going to take a little longer.

**Theresa:** Okay and I know when I wrote about this on my blog and it like exploded everyone was so excited. I don't mean the Kraut Source exploded I mean when I wrote about it on the internet it exploded. But when I wrote about this on my website, I had some questions and you were really great because you came in and answered the questions and the comments. But one of the questions is if everything is stainless steel, that all the parts to the Kraut Source that go on top of the jar are stainless steel, one concern that some people had was they thought that stainless steel would kill all the good bacteria. And so you had a great answer for that.

**Karen:** Right so and that's a very good question. You know when it comes to using metal it's actually we can go left and right. So I'll answer your question first with the stainless steel. So the parts of Kraut Source are made from a really high quality stainless steel. And it's the same quality with which people ferment beer or wine. And so they're using those barrels for fermentation and if stainless steel were to kill all the bacteria they would not be able to ferment. Because as you know beer and wine are fermented products. And it really relies on the proliferation of yeast to make the fermentation happen.

Then to answer that question, stainless steel does not kill off bacteria, although it definitely does a very good job in keeping everything nice and clean so that bad bacteria cannot proliferate or hang onto the surface area. Because with stainless steel as many people know you know it's dishwasher safe, you can wash it in very hot water, you can boil it. And so there's very little chance that bad bacteria will live on stainless steel and that's why we chose to use stainless steel. On the other side, you should never ferment in a vessel or have parts that are mixed metal. In other words if you are not sure that it's stainless steel, do not use it because with mixed metals you don't know what it's composed of and it can actually leech into your fermentation.

**Theresa:** Well I knew aluminum wasn't too good to use.

**Karen:** No.

**Theresa:** Okay well that's good. And stainless steel you can keep it really, really clean. And in the restaurants you know there's a lot of stainless steel because it's very easy to keep clean so you're not introducing anything bad.

**Karen:** Right, exactly. And it doesn't absorb or hold onto bacteria like wood does or even some ceramic pots will hold onto bacteria because it's porous.

**Theresa:** Right. Well what I love about the Kraut Source, aside from the fact that I don't have to use my giant croc and make giant batches at a time, is that it looks so cool. It really is beautiful sitting on the counter. Yeah I love it.

**Karen:** Thank you.

**Theresa:** So since we're talking about how you use it, I would love you to go through the steps of how would you make sauerkraut and put it into the Kraut Source.

**Karen:** Okay and that's a great question. For one, for those who are intimidated by it, just know that it's a very, very fun process. And if you don't like to cook, guess what? You're not cooking. There's no heat involved. [laughs]

**Theresa:** Right!

**Karen:** So no cooking necessary [laughs]. Well since we're talking about Kraut Source. Just go buy the quart sized mason jar. Which is a nice batch for someone to try out if you don't want to cut up for pounds and pounds of cabbage.

So for the Kraut Source mason jar, whether you're using Kraut Source or another device, take a head of cabbage and ideally you get it from the farmer's market or even better if you grow your own. Optimally if it's organic is definitely better. And by weight, a pound and a half of cabbage by weight will fit into a quart sized jar. So more or less a pound an a half.

You take the head of cabbage and you shred it. If you'd like to use a knife you can use a knife and shred it really fine. If you don't you can use a grater or a food processor.

After you shred it, throw it into a big glass or stainless steel bowl with a pound a half of cabbage I usually put in one tablespoon of sea salt and sprinkle that onto your vegetables and massage it really well. Give it some love. A great project if you have kids they can give you a hand. Give it a good massage for about 5 minutes and you'll find that if your'e using cabbage and depending on how fresh the cabbage is as you're massaging it the liquid would be released because you

added salt to it. So the more liquid that's released from the cabbage actually the better.

So after you massage it this is where you can be really creative and you can add in your spices or your herbs. Very traditional kind of german style sauerkraut would just call for caraway and maybe juniper berries. So you can try something like that. Or you don't have to add in anything just the salt would be sufficient.

So after you massage it and you added in your flavourings you would pack it into the mason jar. And by packing it I mean really packing in tight. So you know when you pack it in about a third of the way you can use a wooden pounder or the back of a spoon and pack it in and then just continuing that process until the vegetables reach about the shoulder part of the mason jar. And then at that point if you don't have enough liquid where it's covering the top of the vegetables by at least an inch, you can add in a little more brine. And the proportion for brine is about 1 teaspoon of sea salt to 1 cup of water. Approximately. There are some people who get really geeky and they do percentages and stuff. I'm just bad with numbers so I always go by 1 teaspoon to 1 cup of water.

**Theresa:** Yeah.

**Karen:** I find it works well for me. It's not too salty and it seems to have a nice flavor. So you add in more brine as needed and then you put on whatever device you're using and let fermentation do its magic.

The good thing about doing it in a small batch versus a big batch is the volume is small so the fermentation will happen quicker. So if you're doing just classic sauerkraut about a week to 10 days is sufficient. Whereas if you're doing a big batch you might have to wait at least 2 week stop a month.

**Theresa:** Right, yes. That's the other advantage of using the Kraut Source. So that's great. Well I would love for you to talk just briefly why we have to use sea salt. Because I know when I'm talking about fermenting you know I always want to make sure everyone understands you can't just use or you don't want to use iodide or table salt and there's a reason for that.

**Karen:** Yes and Theresa I'm glad you brought that up. So salt is definitely important. Table salt is highly processed. It's just basically straight sodium chloride with iodine added in. And conventional table salt also has a lot of additives you know like caking agent and stuff like that. So it's not going to make a very good fermentation. And the flavors won't be there. Whereas if you use a high quality sea salt or mineral salt as the word implies there are minerals that are naturally occurring in the salt. And this will really add to the nutritional value of your fermentation as well as the taste. And also when you are using a high quality sea salt or mineral salt it doesn't contribute to high blood pressure. Whereas table salt will.

**Theresa:** Ahhhhh. I didn't know that one either. See I'm learning from you that's awesome. Okay cool. Well I think that's a really great start for someone if they've never made anything before. And you and I have talked before about if someone is just getting started and they could only buy one book, you know one place to start, what would be the book that you would recommend if someone was interested in this and didn't know where to go?

**Karen:** Okay and I'm holding this book right now in my hand. So the author of the book he's really the king of fermentation now in the US and around the world. And his name is Sandor Katz. So that's spelt K-A-T-Z. And the book that I really considered the bible for me is Wild Fermentation.

**Theresa:** Very nice. He is the king of fermentation as you said.

**Karen:** He is.

**Theresa:** Everything that he writes and everything that he does is so thorough that you understand the science behind what you're doing and I think that's really important because that helps take some of the fear away.

**Karen:** Yes, absolutely. And the scientific part he explains very well. But on the other side he is also a true artisan. And an artist when it comes to fermentation. So he also brings a very poetic nuance into making fermented vegetables and from that point of view I also really enjoy his books.

**Theresa:** Yes, he's a great writer. Now you have a book coming out.

**Karen:** Yes, I do. And we've been working on it for awhile. It is a book that is entered around using food and sound nutrition principals to deal with depression.

**Theresa:** Yeah you said that it's so that you grab the right food when you're depressed to try and boost your mood instead of grabbing potato chips which is what we all go for, right? Something salty.

**Karen:** Right, salty or for other people something sweet. Or really carbohydrate based. So all of the very sweet or salty foods that we gravitate to really does not help the mood and it's a very temporary. And so the book that I'm writing is actually called Happy Foods.

**Theresa:** Perfect.

**Karen:** So hopefully it will help to address a problem that we all have. And sometimes it's not really it's really a lot of additives in the food that's making us feel bad.

**Theresa:** Yeah the preservatives.

**Karen:** Exactly, yeah.

**Theresa:** You know how you end up feeling when you go for that whole bag of potato chips and you feel terrible afterwards.

**Karen:** Exactly, yeah. So definitely I have some fermented recipes in the book.

**Theresa:** Absolutely I knew you would. [laughs] So after listening to this podcast and someone is still on the fence and is thinking about starting fermenting but they might still be a little afraid, what would you say to encourage them to give it a shot?

**Karen:** Well I would say you know on so many levels making your own fermented foods at home is a way of being very individual. And you know as Americans we all want to be like, truly individuals. Mavericks. So fermentation you know, no single batch will ever be the same as another batch. So that in and of itself really goes against the cookie cutter industrialized canned food production. So that in itself alone is really fascinating.

And then it's very simple as we mentioned before there's no cooking involved. There's maybe a little bit of chopping. Just the whole process and watching the transformation like a head of cabbage turning into sauerkraut and how it can become a super food is really utilizing what nature provides for us to sort of instigate our own way to health. Because at the end of the day if you're engaged in eating processed foods or even fairly healthy foods but if it's mass produced we never really experience the health benefits of making something at home with your own hands. And I think all of us now really are kind of longing for a return to something more simple. You know we can always step back into the supermarket or go line up and get a burger or you know fried chicken. That's always going to be there. [laughs]

So, I think fermentation is a very, very easy way to start doing something at home that you can enjoy as food. This whole homesteading movement I think is great. But let's face it. Not all of us are going to be able to live on a farm.

**Theresa:** Exactly, right! Right!

**Karen:** Or do even do what you do gardening. So I think fermentation is a very simple way to start that process. You just need some vegetables, a head of cabbage, some salt, a mason jar, a device, and a few days and lo and behold you've done something on your very own!

**Theresa:** Yeah, and you're getting pure food that is farm fresh and you totally know what's in it. And it's healthy and it's good for you. And it boosts your mood [laughs] as you were saying.

**Karen:** And great for your immune system.

**Theresa:** Exactly and your immune system. And I think one thing that you said that we didn't touch on was the fact that watching the transformation and that's another total bonus of the Kraut Source because my other croc is I have one of the big giant German crocs, you put everything in there and it's brown and dark and you can't see really what's going on. But with the Kraut Source you get to watch it.

**Karen:** Yes, exactly, yeah.

**Theresa:** And having kids, they get to watch it too. And it does it changes and the flavor changes with time so it is kind of like a mad science project but it's also a lot of fun and it's a really easy way to do something good for yourself and be getting fresh, pure food and making it even better. You're taking it to the next level. So I hope some people will give it a shot after listening to this. I hope they do. So I think it's great.

And then the flavor. And then you have the whole flavor thing going on and that was another thing in your if you get the Kraut Source it comes with this great recipe book and you have really fantastic ideas on not only the different ways that you can spice up like your sauerkraut or whatever you're making, but even how to use the brine which has all that bacteria in it too. There's different things you can do with the brine so you've really it's a great resource. The whole package is a great resource.

**Karen:** Thank you.

**Theresa:** Sure. Well thank you so much for being on the show. I think we covered a lot of ground and a lot of information and I just really appreciate you taking the time to do that. Thank you.

**Karen:** Thank you Theresa. It's been really, really fun chatting with you and I definitely hope that your listeners after hearing our conversation get inspired to start their own fermentation.

**Theresa:** Oh I think they will. [laughs]

**Karen:** [laughs] We need to bring more live culture back into our lives.

**Theresa:** Yeah, no more sterile! We're just too sterile of a community. [laughs] Well thank you so much.

**Karen:** Thank you very much Theresa, it was a pleasure.

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**Theresa:** So there you go, that was my interview with Karen Diggs of Kraut Source.

Now, you noticed that this week we talked about brine solution and salt in this episode and last week in episode 05, I did an entire episode on pickling salt. So when Karen was talking about sea salt this week.

You may have been wondering which one am I supposed to use?

Well the answer is either one.

When you are trying to get the most health benefits from your fermented foods, most people will choose sea salt because it is packed with essential minerals. Just know that sometimes, occasionally, those minerals can also make the brine a little cloudy (it depends upon the brand and the mineral content). But that cloudiness does not affect the safety of the brine.

Now if you are making just a quick pickle using vinegar and you're not fermenting, then you definitely would want to choose a pickling salt because with that you will get a crystal clear brine in the jar.

But in either situation what you do not want to use is standard kitchen salt because it has iodine and anti-caking agents and that will definitely effect the brine making it super cloudy.

I will have a lot more information on fermenting and all the links that were mentioned in this episode. So just go to [LivingHomegrown.com/06](http://LivingHomegrown.com/06) and I will have it all right there for you.

Well, like I said at the beginning of the podcast – this just scratches the surface of the world of fermenting. Hopefully it'll give you a place to start.



Live Farm Fresh, Without the Farm

Thanks so much for joining me here today. Until next time, I hope that you are able to live just a bit more local, seasonal and homegrown.

Take care!

**Announcer: That's all for this episode of the Living Homegrown podcast. Visit [LivingHomegrown.com](http://LivingHomegrown.com) to download Theresa's free canning resource guide and find more tips on how to live farm fresh, without the farm. Be sure to join Theresa Loe next time on the Living Homegrown podcast.**