



Krautsourcing: Global fermentation

It might seem that fermentation is a new health pursuit of the Western world, with Kombucha consumption on the rise and ever increasingly novel flavours of sauerkraut being produced up in Coburg, but fermentation is a truly global culinary tradition. Fermentation of *something*, be it rice, beans, grains, vegetables, fish or milk.

There are “obvious” ferments, popularised in the cuisines we know and love, like tempeh from Indonesia (mould-fermented soybeans), Japanese Miso (although you have to now search for true miso: look out for mis containing “koji”) Javanese fish sauce, and Ethiopian/Eritrea Injera (sourdough flatbread made primarily from teff flour). Other things you might eat frequently but don’t think of as fermented are traditionally prepared salami (fermented meat), creme fraiche (fermented dessert cheese), Kombucha, soy sauce (traditionally made and unpasteurised) and of course, beer, wine and spirits. But there are some really interesting ferments out there, like a sour drink produced from fermented corn porridge in the Southwest of the United States. This drink, called *chichi* is made with little balls of corn dough which the women impregnate with saliva by chewing. They are added to water to produce a delicious, sour, fizzy fermented drink.¹

There are many more out there, so here is a crash course in the most interesting global ferments from each continent.

	<p>Dhokla - Fermented, steamed, savoury rice and lentil cakes from the state of Gujarat, India. There are different varieties of Dhokla, including Khaman Dhokla (fermented chickpeas, Khatta Dhokla (rice and black lentils), Rava Dhokla (semolina and curd). Dhokla is usually eaten for breakfast.</p>
	<p>Curtido - Spicy, lightly fermented cabbage salad typical in El-Salvadoran and other latin american diets. Ingredients include cabbage, carrot, chilli, onion, red pepper, oregano and coriander. It’s generally fermented in a jar at room temperature for 5 days.</p>
	<p>Kenkey - Popular in West African and Jamaican cuisine, this is a dish made from fermented maize. Corn flour and water are left to ferment for 2-3 days after that, the sourdough is often formed into balls and cooked, and served with sauce made from peppers, chilli, onions, tomato and black pepper.</p>

1. <http://www.westonaprice.org/health-topics/guts-and-grease-the-diet-of-native-americans/>

	<p>Hákari - Fermented Greenland shark or Sleeper shark. A traditional Icelandic food. The shark is placed in a shallow hole in gravelly sand, and covered again. Stones are placed onto of the fermentation grave (my term) the shark ferments in 6-12 weeks.</p>
	<p>Kvass - A fermented beverage of Russia and Ukraine. Kvass is made from rye bread, but can also be made from barley, wheat or buckwheat meal. The grain meal or dried, old bread is fermented in water with yeast, sugar, and mint until there is foam happening, then it is bottled with raisins. It is then ready in 3 days. It's sold like soft drink across Russia and Eastern Europe.</p>
	<p>Tapai (Peuyeum) - An alcoholic paste traditionally used in East and South East Asia. Made from cassava or rice, this can be used as a food or ingredient in recipes. Fermentation is performed by several types of moulds, which the cooked carbohydrate source is inoculated with.</p>
	<p>Viili - A yogurt-like fermented milk product from Scandinavia. The bacteria create particular sugars: <i>exopolysaccharides</i>, which gives Viili a ropey, stretchy, gelatinous consistency. It also forms an edible velvety yeast-like fungus on the top of the yogurt if left alone.</p>
	<p>Pulque - A Mexican alcoholic beverage made from the fermented sap of the maguey (agave) plant. The sap is harvested from mature plants as they flower. It is fermented in vats with added culture <i>Zymomonas mobilis</i>. It has an alcohol content of about 6%, and tastes like sour buttermilk.</p>