

of an urn. Once the urn was full, it would be buried in the earth, beneath a little lean-to in the backyard.

While we worked together that wintry November afternoon, kneeling side by side on straw mats, Hyeon Hee mentioned that Koreans traditionally make a distinction between the “tongue taste” and the “hand taste” of a food. Hand taste? I was beginning to have my doubts about the translator. But as Hyeon Hee elaborated on the distinction, while the two of us gently and methodically massaged spice into leaf, the notion began to come into a rough focus.

Tongue taste is the straightforward chemical phenomenon that takes place whenever molecules make contact with taste buds, something that happens with any food as a matter of course. Tongue taste is the kind of easy, accessible flavor that any food scientist or manufacturer can reliably produce in order to make food appealing. “McDonald’s has tongue taste,” Hyeon Hee explained.

Hand taste, however, involves something greater than mere flavor. It is the infinitely more complex experience of a food that bears the unmistakable signature of the individual who made it—the care and thought and idiosyncrasy that that person has put into the work of preparing it. Hand taste cannot be faked, Hyeon Hee insisted, and hand taste is the reason we go to all this trouble, massaging the individual leaves of each cabbage and then folding them and packing them in the urn just so. What hand taste is, I understood all at once, is the taste of love.

APPENDIX I: FOUR RECIPES

Below are four basic recipes, one based on each of the four transformations: a pork shoulder slow cooked over a fire, a sugo (or Bolognese sauce) cooked in a pot, a whole-grain bread, and a sauerkraut. In some cases, the recipe comes from the cook who taught it to me; in others, I have adapted it from what I was taught. A word of caution that is at the same time a word of encouragement: As I learned in the course of my education in the kitchen, “the recipe is never the recipe.” It might look comprehensive and legally binding, but in fact these recipes should be treated as a set of sketches or notes. Each of them has been tested by a professional recipe tester, so faithfulness to details and procedures will be rewarded on your first attempt. But after that you should feel free to adjust and improvise—these are templates that can be varied endlessly with little risk and much potential reward. I cook these dishes, or variations on them, regularly, only seldom looking at the text. That way, they continue to mutate and evolve, as recipes should. Eventually they become your own.

1. FIRE



PORK SHOULDER BARBECUE

Active Time: 40 minutes

Total Time: 4–6 hours (once the meat has been seasoned)

FOR THE PORK

- 2 tablespoons kosher salt
- 2 tablespoons granulated sugar

One 5- to 6-pound pork shoulder, preferably with bone in and skin on (ask for a “Boston butt”)

2 handfuls hickory chips (other types of wood chips can be substituted)

- 1 disposable aluminum foil shallow pan
- 1 smoker box (see note)

FOR THE VINEGAR-BBQ SAUCE

- 2 cups apple cider vinegar
- 1 cup water
- ¼ cup packed brown sugar
- 2¾ teaspoons fine sea salt
- 4 teaspoons hot pepper flakes
- 1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

PREPARE THE PORK

In a small bowl, mix the salt and sugar until combined. One to three days before you plan to grill, generously sprinkle the salt-sugar rub over the entire pork shoulder, covering every surface. You may not need the full ¼ cup of rub. (A good rule of thumb is 2 teaspoons per pound of meat.) If you're lucky enough to have a shoulder with skin on it, score the skin in a crosshatch pattern, leaving an inch or so between the lines. Try to work some of the rub into the scorings. Refrigerate the pork shoulder uncovered. Bring to room temperature before you put it on the grill.

Prepare a gas grill for smoking. Soak the wood chips in water for about 30 minutes; set aside. On a section of the grill that won't receive direct heat, place a disposable pan or tray beneath the cooking grate and directly on the flavorizer bars or lava rocks (whichever your grill has). Fill the pan about halfway with water; this will catch drippings and keep the inside of the grill moist. Set the cooking grate back on the grill. Adjust the burners so the temperature in the grill is somewhere between 200°F and 300°F. Keep the burners under the drip pan off, and those not under it on. Drain the wood chips and place them in a smoker box. A few minutes before putting the meat on the grill, set the smoker box directly over the heat source. (Smoke works best early in the cooking process.) Place the shoulder on the grill above the drip pan, skin or fat side up.

Cover the grill and roast the pork shoulder for 4 to 6 hours. The time it takes will vary depending on your piece of meat, the grill, and the cooking temperature. Lower temperature is better but takes much longer to cook. Whichever temperature you choose, check occasionally to make sure it does not exceed

300°F or fall below 200°F. When the temperature of the interior of the meat is 195°F, it should be done. Don't be alarmed if the temperature of the pork shoulder rises quickly and then stays at 150°F for a long time (sometimes for several hours). This is called the "stall." Be patient and wait for it to reach 195°F. Check to see if the meat feels relaxed to the touch or if you can pull it apart with a fork. If it resists, give it another 30 minutes.

The meat should by now be a deep brown color. If the outside of the shoulder doesn't have some dark, crispy areas (i.e., bark or, if you started with skin, crackling), crank up the temperature to 500°F for a few minutes. (Keep a close eye on it so it doesn't burn.) Remove the meat from the grill and let it rest for at least 20 to 30 minutes.

MAKE THE VINEGAR-BBQ SAUCE

Combine the vinegar, water, sugar, salt, hot pepper flakes, and black pepper in a medium-size bowl and stir until the sugar and salt have dissolved; set aside.

Either pull the pork shoulder apart with a fork or roughly chop with a cleaver, incorporating crispy bits of crackling (if you have it) or bark. Mix in a generous splash of the vinegar BBQ sauce; adjust the seasoning, making sure there's enough acid (vinegar) and salt. Put the remainder of the sauce in a pitcher on the table. Serve with soft rolls. Coleslaw and beans and rice make good accompaniments.

NOTE: If you don't have a smoker box, you can make one by piercing holes all over a shallow and narrow foil-covered aluminum pan.

VARIATION: With a few small changes, the same pork shoulder can be prepared in an Asian manner. This variation is loosely adapted from a David Chang recipe; the dashi recipe is adapted from Sylvan Brackett's. Cook the shoulder as above but omit the vinegar BBQ sauce. Instead, serve it with this dashi-based ginger-and-scallion dipping sauce. Make the sauce several hours before using so that the flavors have time to meld.

ASIAN DIPPING SAUCE

FOR THE DASHI

- ½ ounce (three 7-inch pieces) kombu seaweed, available at Japanese markets
- 6 cups cool water
- 1 ounce shaved katsubushi (bonito flakes), available at Japanese markets
- 1 dried shiitake mushroom, optional

FOR THE SAUCE

- 2 cups cooled dashi, from recipe below
- ¼ cup thinly sliced scallions
- ¼ cup roughly chopped cilantro
- ¼ cup rice vinegar (cider vinegar or ume plum vinegar can be used instead)
- 3 tablespoons soy sauce
- 2 tablespoons minced ginger (from a 2-inch piece)
- 2 tablespoons mirin
- ½ teaspoon toasted sesame oil
- Pinch hot pepper flakes or togarashi, optional

MAKE THE DASHI

In a medium saucepan, soak the kombu in the water for 1 to 2 hours.

Set the saucepan of kombu on the stove and turn the heat up to high. When the water begins to throw bubbles but before it reaches a rolling boil, remove the kombu with tongs and discard. Stir the katsuobushi into the broth, and return to a boil. Reduce the heat and simmer for 1 minute. Remove from the heat and let sit for 10 minutes.

Strain through a cheesecloth-lined strainer set over a large bowl, then press as much liquid out of the katsuobushi as you can. Reserve the liquid. Discard the katsuobushi. You can add a dried shiitake mushroom to the liquid as it cools. Dashi keeps in the refrigerator for 1 week, or until it starts to cloud.

MAKE THE SAUCE

Combine the dashi, scallions, cilantro, vinegar, soy sauce, ginger, mirin, sesame oil, and hot pepper flakes in a medium bowl. Season to taste with more vinegar, soy, and red pepper flakes. Give the sauce a few hours to meld before serving.

Serve the pork shoulder shredded or chopped, along with rice and leaves of bibb (or other) lettuce. Let guests use the lettuce leaves to make rolls filled with pork and rice and dipped in the sauce.

2. WATER



MEAT SUGO AND PASTA

Here is Samin Nosrat's recipe for sugo, the classic Italian meat sauce that, depending on the region, is also known as Bolognese or ragù. This might not at first seem like a braise—there's no featured chunk of animal protein—but the principles are the same: a dice of onions, carrots, and celery; browned meat; a long, slow simmer in liquid. Making this recipe takes a few hours, so I usually prepare a big batch and freeze some of it in containers. Samin's recipe calls for pork and beef, but it can be made with any kind of meat, including chicken, duck, rabbit, or game.

Active Time: about 3 hours

Total Time: between 5 and 7 hours

FOR THE SPICE SACHET

3 whole cloves

One 1-inch piece cinnamon stick

1 teaspoon black peppercorns

1 teaspoon juniper berries

½ teaspoon whole allspice

¼ teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg

FOR THE SUGO

2 cups pure olive oil (not extra-virgin)
3 pounds boneless pork shoulder (ask butcher to coarsely grind the meat through a ¾-inch die, if possible)

3 pounds beef, veal, or a combination, coarsely ground (any braising cut, such as chuck or round, is fine)

1 (750 ml) bottle dry red wine

4 medium red onions (about 2 pounds), peeled

3 medium carrots (about 12 ounces), peeled

3 medium ribs celery (about 8 ounces), rinsed

1 cup tomato paste

Parmesan rinds, optional

4 bay leaves

One 3-inch strip orange peel

One 3-inch strip lemon peel

3 to 4 cups beef, veal, or chicken stock, preferably homemade

Salt to taste

3 to 4 cups whole milk

FOR SERVING

Cooked pasta

Butter

Parmesan

MAKE THE SACHET

Combine the cloves, cinnamon, peppercorns, juniper berries, allspice, and nutmeg in a cheesecloth and tie with string; set aside.

MAKE THE SUGO

Set a large, wide rondeau or sauté pan over high heat and add enough olive oil to just coat. (In general the bigger the pan, the better.) Cook the pork in batches, adding a third to a half at a time, so that there is space in the pan. (If it's too crowded it will steam instead of sear.) Cook, stirring and breaking up the meat with a wooden spoon, until it sizzles and turns golden brown. (Do not

season the meat—salt draws out water and prevents browning.) Using a slotted spoon, transfer the pork to a large bowl, leaving the rendered fat in the pan.

Add more oil to coat the pan, as needed, and continue cooking the remaining pork and beef in the same way. (If browned bits start to burn on the bottom of the pan, deglaze it between batches with a little red wine, scraping with a wooden spoon as the wine simmers to pull up the tasty bits. Transfer the deglazing liquids to the bowl of meats, wipe the pan dry, add more oil, and continue browning the meats.)

While the meats are browning, make a soffritto. Use a knife or a food processor to mince the onions, carrots, and celery separately until all are very fine. You don't want to be able to identify any of the ingredients in the soffritto once the dish is cooked. (If you choose to use a food processor, pulse the machine frequently, stopping often to scrape down the sides of the bowl to ensure the vegetables are evenly cut. The celery and onion will release a lot of water, so make sure to drain or pat them dry before cooking.)

When the last of the beef has finished cooking, add enough oil to the pan to rise about ¼ inch deep. (There should be what you might consider a scary amount of olive oil in the pot, about 1½ cups, as soffritto means “subfried.”) Add the minced soffritto vegetables and reduce the flame to medium. Cook, stirring often to prevent burning, until the vegetables are brown and tender throughout, about 50 minutes. The vegetables will steam at first and then sizzle. If they start to burn, add some salt or a ladleful of water or stock, and turn down the heat.

Once you are satisfied with the soffritto (don't rush it!), add the bottle of wine to deglaze the pan. As the wine simmers, use the wooden spoon to scrape up the delicious brown bits on the bottom of the pan. Once the wine has reduced a bit and its alcohol has

burned off, add the browned meats, along with the sachet, tomato paste, Parmesan rinds (if using), bay leaves, orange and lemon peels, and about 3 cups of the stock. Season with salt. Bring to a boil, and then add enough milk to just cover the meat, about 3 cups. Let simmer. Once the milk breaks down and the color starts to look appetizing, after 30 to 40 minutes, start tasting the mixture and adjusting salt, acid, sweetness, richness, and body. If the mixture needs more acid, add wine. If it seems bland, add tomato paste to bring it to life and make it a bit more acidic and sweet. If it needs to be richer or the meat seems dry, add a splash of milk. If it needs more body, add stock.

Simmer over the lowest possible heat, skimming off the fat from time to time, and stirring often, until both the pork and beef are tender and the flavors have melded, anywhere from 2 to 4 hours total. Add more of the remaining milk, stock, or water to ensure that the meat always stays just barely immersed. (But don't drown the meat in liquid.) Continue to taste as you go but stop adding ingredients at least 30 minutes before the sugo is done so they have time to cook into the sauce.

When you are satisfied that the sugo is done, use a spoon or ladle to skim off the fat that has risen to the surface and remove the spice sachet, Parmesan rinds, bay leaves, and orange and lemon peels. Taste and adjust the salt again.

TO SERVE

Serve with pasta cooked al dente and tossed with a few tablespoons of butter. Top with lots of grated Parmesan cheese. This recipe makes a lot, but for this much work, you deserve leftovers!

3. AIR



WHOLE-WHEAT COUNTRY LOAF

This recipe is adapted from Chad Robertson's country loaf, in *Tartine Bread*. Simply replacing white flour with whole grain in his recipe will create a decent loaf of bread, but it won't be as airy or flavorful as it will be if you follow this revised version of the recipe. This recipe calls for 75 percent of the flour to be whole grain; you can adjust the percentage of whole-grain flour higher or lower as you prefer. In keeping with the custom for bread recipes, quantities here are given by weight rather than volume; you will need a digital scale, calibrated in grams, to follow this recipe. Note: Be sure to build your starter at least a week before you plan to bake. Make two loaves.

Active Time: about 70 minutes

Total Time: between 5 and 10 days

FOR THE STARTER

- 50 grams stone-ground whole-grain flour, plus more as needed to feed the starter (at least 150 grams more)
- 50 grams unbleached all-purpose flour, plus more as needed to feed the starter (at least 150 grams more)
- 100 grams warm tap water, plus more as needed to feed the starter

FOR THE LEAVEN

- 100 grams stone-ground whole-grain flour
- 100 grams unbleached all-purpose flour

200 grams warm tap water
30–35 grams starter (recipe from above)

FOR THE BREAD

600 grams stone-ground whole-grain flour
250 grams unbleached all-purpose flour (higher protein bread flour is okay), plus extra for dusting work surface
150 grams rye or pumpernickel flour
900 grams warm (roughly 80°F) tap water
3½ grams or 1⅛ teaspoons instant or rapid-rise yeast (or half of a ¼-ounce packet) mixed with 50 grams warm tap water, optional
25 grams kosher or fine sea salt
Rice flour, for dusting proofing bowl, optional

MAKE THE STARTER

In a small glass or plastic container (a clear container allows you to watch microbial activity), mix 50 grams each of the whole-grain and all-purpose flours until combined. Add the water and stir until the consistency of a smooth batter. Leave the mixture open to the air, stirring vigorously for about 30 seconds at least once a day or whenever you think of it. If the mixture dries out, add a bit of warm water to bring it back to the consistency of a batter. The wild yeast and bacteria in the air, on the flour, and on your hands will eventually start to eat the sugars in the flour and ferment.

As soon as you observe signs of microbial activity (e.g., lumps on the top, bubbles within the batter, or the smell of beer or yeast or ripe fruit)—which can take as long as a week—feed the starter daily. Discard approximately 80 percent of it and replace with fresh flour

and water in equal amounts (about 50 grams of whole-wheat flour, 50 grams of all-purpose flour, and 100 grams warm water). Stir until smooth. Once it has become active again (i.e., bubbling), keep the starter covered at a warm room temperature. If you won't be baking for a while, you can refrigerate or freeze your starter. To do so, feed it, let it sit for a couple of hours at room temperature, then add enough additional flour (the 50/50 mixture) to dry it out in a ball; freeze or refrigerate. A few days before you want to use it again, wake up the starter by bringing it to room temperature; feed it with the same amount of water and flour as above twice daily, discarding 80 percent of it each time, until it's lively again.

MAKE THE LEAVEN

The night before baking the bread, make a leaven. In a glass bowl, combine the whole-wheat and all-purpose flours with the water. Add 2 tablespoons of the starter and mix thoroughly. Cover with a towel and leave out overnight in a draft-free spot.

MAKE THE BREAD

The night before baking the bread, “soak” the whole-grain, all-purpose, and rye flours: In a large bowl, combine the whole-grain, all-purpose, and rye flours with 850 grams of the water, mixing with a spatula or by hand until there are no lumps or patches of dry flour remaining. (A recommended extra step: In the case of the whole-grain flour and the rye flour, pass them through a flour sifter to remove the larger bits of bran; reserve the larger bits in a small bowl for use later.) Cover the bowl with plastic wrap and leave out overnight in a draft-free spot. The reason for this step is to thoroughly moisten the whole-grain flours before the fermentation begins; this softens the bran (making for a more voluminous loaf)

and begins the breakdown of the starches into sugars (deepening flavors and color).

In the morning, test your leaven by dropping a tablespoon of it in warm water. If it floats, you're all set. If not, you'll probably want to add some yeast to the leaven as an insurance policy—mix 3½ grams (1 ½ teaspoons) of fast-acting yeast into 50 grams of warm water. After a few minutes, add to the bowl of leaven. It will seem alarmingly wet—the consistency of a thick batter. Don't worry.

Add about half of the leaven to the bowl with the wet dough; reserve the rest of the leaven as your starter going forward. (If you use commercial yeast, put aside half the leaven before adding it.) Mix the dough thoroughly and let rest for at least 20 and up to 45 minutes.

Meanwhile, in a cup, mix the salt in the remaining 50 grams of the warm tap water. After the dough mixture has rested, add the salty water and work it in thoroughly by hand.

BULK FERMENTING THE DOUGH

This takes 4 to 5 hours, depending on the ambient temperature and the vigor of your starter. Every 45 to 60 minutes, give the dough a turn in the bowl—wet your dominant hand, work it down the side of the bowl, and bring up the mass of dough from the bottom, stretching it upward and then folding it over the top. Give the bowl a quarter turn, and repeat this action until you've completed at least one revolution of the bowl. These stretches will strengthen the gluten and fold air into the dough. Watch for the formation of air bubbles; smell and taste along the way. The dough is ready to be divided and shaped when it feels billowy and cohesive—it wants to stick to itself more than the bowl. It should smell mildly yeasty and slightly sour. If it smells distinctly sour, end bulk fermentation and proceed to the next step.

DIVIDING THE DOUGH

When you're ready to shape, sprinkle a work surface with flour. Spill the dough out on the surface. Using a plastic dough scraper, divide the mass into 2 more or less equal halves. Shape these into globes, using your floured hands together with the scraper to rotate the dough against the work surface until it forms a ball with some surface tension. Cover the 2 globes with a towel and let them rest for 20 minutes.

SHAPING THE DOUGH

Using the scraper, flip one of the globes, which will have flattened somewhat, onto its back. Grab the edge of dough farthest from you with all your fingers, stretch it away from you, and then fold it back over the top. Do the same to the edge of dough closest to you, and then to each of the sides. You should have before you a rough rectangle of dough. Next, take each of the corners in turn, stretching and folding over the top. Now, cup your hands around the package of dough and roll it away from you until you have a short, taut cylinder, with the seams on the bottom.

If you sifted the whole-grain flour, spread the reserved bran on a plate or baking sheet and gently roll the dough in it to cover. Sprinkle either rice flour or any remaining bran into the bottom of a large bowl and then place the round of dough in the bowl, top side down. (Use a proofing basket instead if you have one.) Do the same with the second loaf, giving it its own bowl.

PROOFING

This is the second fermentation. Cover the bowls with towels and let them rest in a warm spot for 2 to 3 hours, till the dough gets puffy again. (Alternatively, put the shaped loaves in the refrigerator for several hours or overnight; this will retard fermentation while

continuing to build flavor. It's not necessary to proof it again after refrigeration, but give it an hour or so at room temperature before baking.)

BAKING

Place the top and bottom of a Dutch oven (or a large ceramic casserole or combo cooker) on the center rack in the oven and preheat to 500°F.

With kitchen mitts, carefully remove the bottom of the pot from the oven and set it on the stovetop. Turn the bowl (or basket) over the pot to drop the proofed loaf into it. Don't worry if it doesn't land squarely; it will straighten out. Now, take a single-edge razor blade (or a lame) and score the top of the loaf, in any pattern you like. But be decisive! Now take the top of the pot from the oven and place it over the pot to seal, then move the whole thing into the oven. Lower the temperature to 450°F and set a timer for 20 minutes.

After 20 minutes, remove the top of the pot. The loaf will have doubled in volume and acquired a pale brown or tan color. Close the oven and give it another 23 to 25 minutes to bake with the top off. The loaf should now be a dark mahogany with a bit of blackening here and there, especially where it was scored. Remove the pot from the oven and the bread from the pot, using an oven mitt and a spatula. Tap it on the bottom, which should be very dark. A hollow percussive sound means the bread is properly cooked. If the bottom is pale and the sound is not percussive, return it to the oven for 5 more minutes.

Set it on a rack to cool for a few hours. Whole-grain bread is usually at its best on day two and remains good for several days after that, kept in a paper (not plastic) bag.

4. EARTH



SAUERKRAUT

Active Time: 1 hour

Total Time: 1 to 2 weeks, or longer

This recipe is based on Sandor Katz's version of sauerkraut, or "kraut-chi," though it is more like a template for cabbage-based ferments than a formal recipe. For spices, you can add juniper berries, caraway seeds, and coriander for a more Old World kraut, or add ginger, garlic, and hot peppers for something more like kimchi. But do use some spice—they inhibit mold from forming.

4 pounds cabbage (or a mixture of mostly cabbage, plus fruits and vegetables, such as apples, onions, daikon radish, carrots)

6–8 teaspoons fine sea salt

Spices (1½ teaspoons juniper berries, 1 tablespoon coriander seeds, or 1 tablespoon caraway seeds for Old World kraut, or whatever spices and quantities you like)

One (½- to 1-gallon) wide-mouthed glass or ceramic container fitted with a lid, or two to three 1-quart containers, or a sauerkraut crock

Thinly chop or shred the cabbage into roughly ¼-inch thick slices and place in a very large bowl or tub. Shredding the cabbage on a mandoline gives the best result. If using other fruits and vegetables, slice them to about the same thickness as the cabbage and add to the

bowl. For odd-shaped vegetables like carrots, using a thick box grater is easiest. The rougher the cut, the better as more surface area is exposed to the salt.

Add the salt (1½ to 2 teaspoons per pound of cabbage mixture) to the cabbage mixture, mixing it into the shredded leaves with your hands, squeezing the cabbage and pounding on the mixture as you go. (It's best to start by adding 1 teaspoon of fine sea salt per pound and then add another half or whole teaspoon extra per pound if needed.) Within several minutes, the salt will begin drawing water from the cabbage leaves. Continue to squeeze, bruise, or pound the cabbage to speed up the process. You can also place a weight on the mixture to drive out liquid. Wait until the vegetables are dripping wet, like a sopping sponge. Taste the cabbage. It should taste salted but not salty. If it's too salty, add more shredded cabbage or briefly rinse with water to remove. If it's not salty enough, or not wet enough, add a little more salt. Add the spices, if using, and toss.

Pack the mixture tightly in a glass jar or crock fitted with a lid that can hold at least 8 cups, making sure all the air is squeezed out and the vegetables are completely submerged in their liquid. (If you don't have a large container, use two or three smaller containers, about 1 quart each in volume.) There should be at least 3 inches between the packed cabbage and the top of the jar. Push the vegetables down tightly using your fist. They should be covered in their liquid. Before sealing the jar, either weight the vegetables down with a small ceramic or glass jar or insert something nonreactive between the lid and the vegetables to keep them submerged in the liquid: a plastic bag filled with stones or Ping-Pong balls works well or lay a large cabbage, fig, or grape leaf over the shredded cabbage and weight that down with clean stones or other heavy nonreactive objects. There should be enough liquid to

cover, but if not add a little water. (Cabbages can lose cell water depending on growing and storage conditions.) Any vegetables exposed to the air will rot. If surface molds form, scrape them away and remove discolored sauerkraut. The kraut may smell funky, like a gym locker, but it shouldn't smell rotten. For the first few days, store at room temperature, ideally between 65°F and 75°F, then move to a cooler location, such as a basement. That's it: The mixture will ferment on its own; the necessary microbes are already present on the leaves.

If you're making kraut in a sealed glass container, make sure to release the pressure every few days, especially the first couple of days, when bubbling will be most active. In a mason jar, you'll know pressure is building when the metal top begins to bulge; open just enough to release the gas and reseal. Those old-timey glass crocks with the hinged tops held in place by a metal clasp work well since they will release pressure along their rubber gasket. Easiest of all is a ceramic crock designed for making sauerkraut. Available online in various sizes, these crocks have a water lock that releases bubbles of gas while keeping air out. If at any point water seeps out of the jar during fermentation and the cabbage mixture is not fully submerged in liquid, dissolve ½ teaspoon of fine sea salt in a cup of water. Add enough brine to keep the sauerkraut submerged in liquid.

How long before the kraut is ready? It depends—on the ambient temperature, the amount of salt used, and the local population of microbes. Taste it after a week, then two weeks, and then weekly after that. When the level of sourness and crunchiness is to your liking, move your kraut to the refrigerator to put the breaks on the fermentation.

VARIATION: To make a version of kimchi, replace the cabbage with Napa cabbage and Daikon radish; the cabbage can be

sliced into half-inch rounds, and the daikon into quarter-inch rounds. Replace the sauerkraut spice mixture with:

- 4 cloves minced or crushed garlic (or more, to taste)
- 4-inch piece fresh ginger, sliced (or more, to taste)
- 2 tablespoons powdered red pepper (or more, to taste)
- 2 tablespoons coriander seeds (or half a bunch of fresh cilantro, roughly chopped)
- 4 green onions

The rest of the process is the same as for sauerkraut.

APPENDIX II:

A SHORT SHELF OF BOOKS ON COOKING

These are the cookbooks and books on cooking I've found indispensable and to which I return again and again for explanation and inspiration.

COOKING IN GENERAL

The Art of Simple Food, by Alice Waters

The Cambridge World History of Food, edited by Kenneth F. Kiple and Kriemhild Coneè Ornelas

Catching Fire: How Cooking Made Us Human, by Richard Wrangham

The Essence of Cookery, by Karl Friedrich von Rumohr

An Everlasting Meal: Cooking with Economy and Grace, by Tamar Adler

A History of Cooks and Cooking, by Michael Symons

How to Cook Everything, by Mark Bittman

On Food and Cooking: The Science and Lore of the Kitchen, by Harold McGee

FIRE

The Barbecue! Bible, by Steven Raichlen

The Magic of Fire: Hearth Cooking, by William Rubel

Seven Fires: Grilling the Argentine Way, by Francis Mallmann

Smokestack Lightning: Adventures in the Heart of Barbecue Country, by Lolis Eric Elie; photographs by Frank Stewart

WATER

Braise: A Journey Through International Cuisine, by Daniel Boulud

Mediterranean Clay Pot Cooking, by Paula Wolfert

A Platter of Figs and Other Recipes, by David Tanis

Soffritto: Tradition and Innovation in Tuscan Cooking, by Benedetta Vitali

Something from the Oven: Reinventing Dinner in 1950s America, by Laura Shapiro

The Taste for Civilization: Food, Politics, and Civil Society, by Janet A. Flammang

AIR

The Bread Baker's Apprentice: Mastering the Art of Extraordinary Bread, by Peter Reinhart

The Bread Builders: Hearth Loaves and Masonry Ovens, by Daniel Wing and Alan Scott

English Bread and Yeast Cookery, by Elizabeth David

Peter Reinhart's Whole Grain Breads, by Peter Reinhart

Tartine Bread, by Chad Robertson

EARTH

The Art of Fermentation, by Sandor Katz

Brewing Classic Styles: 80 Winning Recipes Anyone Can Brew, by John J. Palmer and Jamil Zainasheff

How to Brew: Everything You Need to Know to Brew Beer Right the First Time, by John J. Palmer

Microcosmos: Four Billion Years of Microbial Evolution, by Lynn Margulis and Dorion Sagan

Uncorking the Past: The Quest for Wine, Beer, and Other Alcoholic Beverages, by Patrick E. McGovern

Wild Fermentation, by Sandor Katz