

# Feeding your microbiome with **ferments**

From birth onwards, the human gut microbiota swiftly increases in diversity. It reaches an adult-like stage at about three years of age. After this age, the composition may fluctuate in response to external factors such as the environment, antibiotics, and the foods we consume.

Eating fermented or probiotic-rich foods is an age-old secret to protecting health as well as preserving foods. The traditional process of fermentation allows airborne bacteria to grow on food to prevent it from spoiling. Once consumed, that bacteria, which is known as lactic acid bacteria, supports the growth of the healthy population of bacteria in your intestines.

The benefits of eating fermented foods was first discovered at the turn of the last century by Dr. Elie Metchnikoff. He received a Nobel Prize for his work on probiotics. His research led to the understanding that ferments can:

- prevent chronic and degenerative diseases
- improve digestion
- possess anti-cancer and immune boosting properties
- control inflammation

When it comes to feeding your microbiome with ferments, remember that a little goes a long way. Think of kraut more as a condiment not a side dish. Have one to three forkfuls with each meal to boost digestion and give yourself a steady, daily dose of the good guys your gut needs. (Start slow and see how you feel!)