

Sauerkraut
Problems and Solutions

PROBLEM	CAUSE	PREVENTION
White scum on top	Weight on top of cabbage and liquid not sufficient to exclude air during fermentation. Does not occur often; skim off.	Follow directions for covering with plate or plastic bag filled with brine.
Slimy kraut	Too high temperature during fermentation. Too low salt content.	Keep sauerkraut between 70-75°F during fermentation. Use 1 cup salt for 25 pounds sauerkraut.
Dark kraut	Iodized salt was used. Uneven salting. Too high curing temperature. Too warm storage conditions, or stored for long period. Cabbage not trimmed and washed properly.	Follow directions in PNW 355, <i>Pickling Vegetables</i> , for salting sauerkraut and storage.
Soft kraut	Insufficient salt (1.7% or less concentration of salt solution is too low). Too high temperature during fermentation. Uneven distribution of salt. Air pockets caused by improper packing prior to fermentation.	Use correct amount of salt, mix salt into cabbage well, ferment in a cool place (75°F or less).
Pink kraut	Yeast growth on surface caused by too much salt, uneven distribution of salt or if kraut is improperly covered or weighted during fermentation. Yeast thrives on salt concentration over 2.25%.	Follow directions in PNW 355, <i>Pickling Vegetables</i> , for salting and fermenting.
Rotten kraut	Usually on the surface where cabbage has not been covered sufficiently to exclude air during fermentation.	Cover to exclude air. Discard.
Moldy kraut	Usually on the surface when fermented in too warm condition and not covered tightly.	Cover to exclude air. Ferment at temperature less than 75°F. Discard.

Source: Food Safety Advisor Volunteer Handbook
 Washington State University/University of Idaho, 2002