

# A SIMPLE FERMENTED HOT SAUCE RECIPE CAYENNE + HABANERO

## FERMENTATION IS MY JAM

Have you heard about how much I love hot sauce, and that fermented hot sauce is even more awesome? Explosive heat, delicious flavor, and yes, it's good for you too, full of enzymes, beneficial lactic acid bacteria (i.e., probiotics), vitamin C and, in this recipe, beta carotene too. In traditional cultures, all hot sauce was made through fermentation. Why? It's a natural way to preserve fresh food as the lactic acid produced is strong and protective, and prevents any bad bacteria that can kill us (like botulism) from developing. Did you know that some of your beloved classic American hot sauce brands are still made this way? Both Tabasco and Sriracha are fermented with the time-honored fermented hot sauce formula: chillies + salt + time. Tabasco is aged for 3-years in whiskey barrels; I highly recommend you read [the story of this product](#), as it's pretty cool.

## PICK-A-PEPPER

What pepper variety to use? Be creative. I like Cayenne peppers as they have good flavor and nice balanced heat. Scotch Bonnets are sweet, fruity (very hot), jalapenos (usually medium hot), serranos (medium hot), poblano (mild), Fresno (medium hot) and cherry bomb peppers (medium hot) are all good choices. Try the Eckerton Hill Farm booth at the Union Square greenmarket, or Stokes farm at the Fort Greene Farmer's market on Saturdays for a great selection of peppers.

Check out my recipe for fermented [Smoky Scotch Bonnet + Bourbon hot sauce](#), as that recipe is *extra*, with lots of flavor and pizzazz. This recipe, by contrast, is simple and pure. Make both, dudes.

## HOW TO DO IT

Fermented hot sauce is made with chillies + salt + time as a base. You can make this recipe more extra by adding ginger, garlic, herbs or fruit after it has fermented.

Let's get started. Here's the overview of the recipe.

## A SIMPLE FERMENTED HOT SAUCE

TOTAL TIME: 40 MINUTES | MAKES APPROXIMATELY 2 QUARTS OR 32 X 2-OUNCE HOT SAUCE BOTTLES

### :::: INGREDIENTS :::

- 2 pounds fresh chillies (i like to use a combo of red, orange or yellow Cayenne and Habanero chillies for this recipe, as they result in a gorgeous color)
- 6 cloves garlic
- 3 tablespoons fine sea salt

- 4 cups warm water

#### :::: EQUIPMENT :::

- latex or other protective gloves (you can even use dish gloves or ziplock bags, in a pinch)
- [glass fermentation weights](#)
- a blender
- mason jars
- [airlocks](#)

#### :::: INSTRUCTIONS :::

##### **THE PREP**

1. *WEARING PROTECTIVE GLOVES*, remove the tops from the peppers, and split them in half lengthwise.
2. Remove the garlic clove skins, but leave whole.

##### **THE FERMENTATION**

- *Using gloves*, tightly pack a quart-sized mason jar with the hot peppers, leaving about 1-inch headspace. Shove in the cloves of garlic.
- *Make your brine*: whisk the salt into the 4 cups of warm water until it dissolves. Pour this brine over the chiles and garlic.
- Place a fermentation weight (or you can use a ziplock bag with water in it) over the chiles and garlic so they remain submerged beneath the brine. Seal the jar tightly with an airlocked lid, and allow the chiles to ferment at room temperature 2 to 3 weeks, or until they smell and taste nice and sour. Is your apartment really hot? Two weeks might be plenty of time.
- Strain the brine and reserve it. Transfer the chiles to a high-speed blender. Add 1 cup of the reserved brine to the blender, and process until very smooth. Strain the pulp through a fine-mesh sieve, and bottle.
- Store in the refrigerator, which will slow the fermentation.