

The Essentialist

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'Sourdough' Oatmeal Porridge

by Catherine Haug for ESP

(all photos by C. Haug)



This porridge method is similar to my ['Sourdough' Pie Crust](#), which uses yogurt rather than sourdough starter to ferment the grain, since the leavening ability of sourdough starter is not wanted in a pie crust.

A similar method can be applied to other baked goodies such as cakes, cookies, coffee cakes, and quick breads. And it can also be applied to cooked porridges. See my ESP post [The Importance of Grinding your own Flour](#) for explanation of why grain fermentation is so important for health.

How to ferment oatmeal (or other grain) for porridge

Opening a package of instant oatmeal is certainly much quicker, but is far from having the optimal nutritional value provided by old-fashioned porridge. So I make up a large batch, and store individual servings in the fridge or freezer. Reheating is easy in a steamer pot.

Ingredients

This recipe makes 6 servings, but you can easily modify it to make more (or fewer) servings.

To ferment:

- 2 cups rolled oats
- 2 Tbsp plain, unsweetened yogurt (or buttermilk, kefir or lemon juice)
- 2 cups warm water (105° - 110° F)

To cook:

- 1 - 1 1/2 cups water
- 1/2 tsp unrefined sea salt

Equipment

- Bowl
- liquid measuring cup
- heavy-bottomed saucepan, with lid. Good quality stainless steel or enameled steel (not aluminum), with an all-clad aluminum or a copper disc in the bottom for even heating. Or you can use a double boiler.

My saucepan is stainless steel with an all-clad aluminum disc on the bottom, and a tempered glass lid so I can watch it cook.

Ferment the oats

Assemble ingredients & equipment for the ferment:

Choose a bowl that will allow the oats to double in size as they absorb the liquid. Measure oats into the bowl; warm the water to 105° - 110° F; have the yogurt ready.



Oatmeal ferment ingredients

Mix the ferment

Measure 2 Tbsp yogurt and stir into the warm water, then pour over oats:



Yogurt added to warm water



Add yogurt-water to oats



Stir to combine oats and yogurt water

Let the ferment rest overnight

Cover the bowl with a cotton dish towel, as fermentation happens best in the dark, and the cloth will also keep debris from getting into your ferment.



Ferment covered for overnight soak

Cook the porridge:

Ingredients for cooking:



Fermented oats, water and salt

Measure 1 cup of water into heavy-bottomed saucepan; add salt and stir to dissolve.



Add salt to water



Stir to dissolve salt into water

Add fermented oats to saucepan and stir to combine.

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Add fermented oats to salt water

Bring to a slow boil over medium-high heat - just until it begins to bubble. Reduce heat to low and give it a stir. Let it bubble very gently, stirring occasionally, for 10 minutes or more, adding more water as needed to keep it from sticking to the pot. The more water you add, the larger the volume of porridge, and the softer the oats. I like to cook it at least 20 minutes and usually add 1/4 -1/2 cup more water.



Stir and begin heating



Beginning to boil - lower heat

[Note that the longer you simmer the porridge, the more nutritious it gets (more gluten is broken down, more minerals are released from the phytates).]



Ready to rest

Give it a warm rest

Stir in a bit more water (1 Tbsp or so); cover saucepan and reduce heat to lowest simmer. I have to use a simmer plate because my lowest gas flame is too hot.



My simmer plate



Set covered pot over simmer plate to cook very slowly

Let it rest at lowest possible simmer, 5 - 10 minutes before serving.



Ready to eat - nice and fluffy

Serve, or store and reheat

To serve:

Thaw first (if frozen); reheat by steaming for 10 minutes. Garnish with honey, fruit, nuts, cinnamon or other spices. Add a pat of butter, or pour milk or cream over the porridge. And enjoy!

(Photo, right: served with Shelli's Blueberries and raw cream)

Another option is to sprinkle some ground flax seeds over the porridge when you serve, to enhance your Omega-3 intake.



To store & reheat:

Or transfer to storage container(s) and let cool before adding lid and transferring to refrigerator or freezer.

This amount lasts me 1 week, so I pour the porridge into a single container, divide it like a pie into 6 servings, and keep it in the fridge (covered with the red lid).

To reheat a serving, transfer to bowl and heat over simmering water. I use a simmer pot with basket to hold the bowl above the water. Or you could use a double boiler.



6 servings in storage container



Reheat in simmer pot

Resources

- *Nourishing Traditions* by Sally Fallon
- *Wild Fermentation* by Sandor Katz
- [Rebuild from Depression](http://www.rebuild-from-depression.com), by Amanda Rose (www.rebuild-from-depression.com)

Related ESP Articles

- ['Sourdough Pie Crust'](http://essentialstuff.org/index.php/2011/05/23/Cat/sourdough-pie-crust/) (essentialstuff.org/index.php/2011/05/23/Cat/sourdough-pie-crust/)
- [The Problem with Unfermented Grains](http://essentialstuff.org/index.php/2011/05/22/Cat/the-problem-with-unfermented-grains/) (essentialstuff.org/index.php/2011/05/22/Cat/the-problem-with-unfermented-grains/)
- [The Importance of Grinding your own Flour](http://essentialstuff.org/index.php/2011/05/22/Cat/the-importance-of-grinding-your-own-flour/) (essentialstuff.org/index.php/2011/05/22/Cat/the-importance-of-grinding-your-own-flour/)
- [Making and Using Sourdough, a Panel Presentation](http://essentialstuff.org/index.php/2011/05/29/Cat/gathering-summary-sourdough-a-panel-presentation-may-18-2011/) (essentialstuff.org/index.php/2011/05/29/Cat/gathering-summary-sourdough-a-panel-presentation-may-18-2011/)