



The Reference Point
When you're ready for solutions.

43334 Bryant St. Suite 9
Fremont, CA 94539

Phone: (510) 498-8730
Fax: (510) 498-8757
www.TheReferencePoint.com

The Fermentation Process: Troubleshooting

As always, when fermenting any food, if you notice any bits of mold growing on the top during the fermentation process, it may be best to discard the batch and start over. Always try to troubleshoot what factors may have created this result so you can be sure to create a fabulous fermented food the next time.

Troubleshooting: So you were really excited to create a brand new fermented food and then what a let-down, you noticed that some small bits of mold were growing on top on the food. But please don't give up too easily since creating delicious fermented foods can be a wonderful addition to your daily diet. The following is a list of some common reasons regarding why your fermentation may have failed:

- ☞ **Room was too cold or drafty.** Was the room where you were doing the fermentation process too cold? Even if the heating element (in this case, the dehydrator) is set at 105 degrees, if the room is too cold, the actual temperature of the fermentation jars set near the dehydrator may be too cool. The same may be true for a drafty kitchen. Frequent drafts of air may cool the fermenting jars to too low of a temperature for adequate fermentation.
- ☞ **Settings were wrong.** Did you check to make sure the dehydrator was set at 105 degrees? If someone bumped the setting, the setting may be too low (and thus, your fermenting jars may be too cool during the fermentation process.)
- ☞ **Jars were not contacting the dehydrator.** Did you check to make sure that one side of each of the fermentation jars was touching the dehydrator? If the jars got moved or bumped and were displaced an inch or so away from the dehydrator, the temperature inside the jar may not be warm enough for a good fermentation process.
- ☞ **Dirty jars, bowls or spoons.** Were the glass jars, mixing bowl and utensils cleaned well before you used them? If not, bits of old food or other "stuff" may compete with your fermentation.
- ☞ **Wrong amounts used in recipe.** Did you ever get mixed up when using a "teaspoon" vs. a "tablespoon" in measuring ingredients? If too much or too little amounts of ingredients in the recipe were used, then your fermentation may simply not work well.
- ☞ **Settings too hot.** If the room where you are doing the fermentation process is too warm or if your dehydrator settings are too high, then your jars may get too hot and the fermentation process may "wear out" too fast and fizzle.
- ☞ **Old or poor quality ingredients.** If any of your ingredients are too old or test poorly, they may be unable to assist in promoting a smooth fermentation process.
- ☞ **Too much water in the food.** For example, if you did not drain any extra water in cooked rice before placing it in a jar to ferment it, the extra water may create a "soupy" mixture and ruin the fermentation process.
- ☞ **Fermentation went too long.** A good rule of thumb for the length of the fermentation process for cooked rice and beans is 12 to 48 hours. If your fermentation process goes too long, it may "wear out" too fast and create problems.

May you become a fermented foods gourmet and enjoy the superior taste and quality of home-fermented foods for a lifetime!