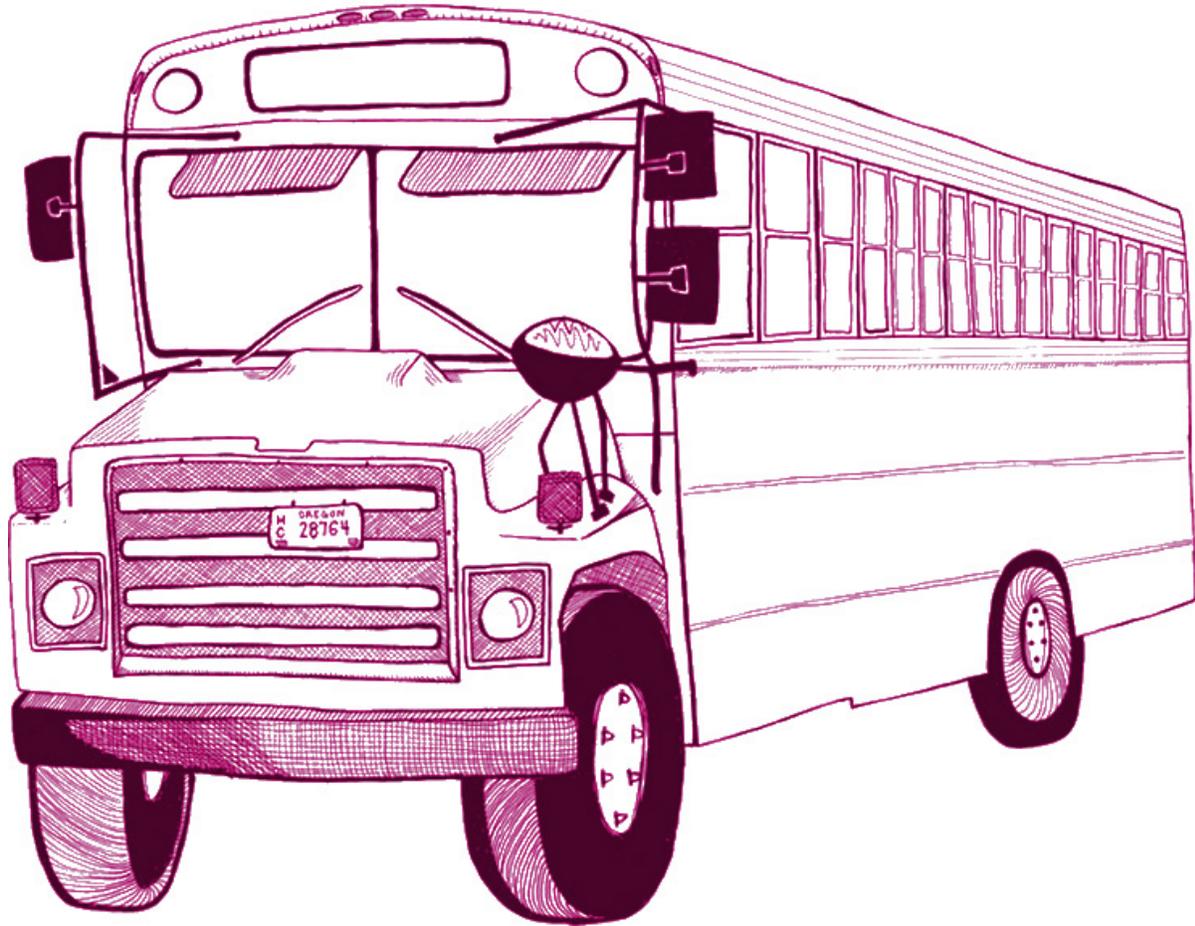


# FERMENTATION ON WHEELS



*gastronomic nomads are coming to a city near you*

## 2014 PRESS KIT

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# Mission



Fermentation on Wheels is a grassroots organization that provides free food education and inspires people through workshops, literature, & visual arts projects that raise awareness about food sustainability alongside teaching fermentation. The community organizes potlucks and teaches fermentation in a school bus that has been converted into a creative kitchen and workshop space. These events also serve as a way to bridge communities and restore a genuine fascination and interest in local, traditionally-preserved foods.

Fermentation on Wheels gives people the tools to consume foods more thoughtfully and also provides communities with resources on how to get involved in the food movement. By traveling the country, visiting farmers and connecting them with consumers, we hope to make a powerful statement and emphasize the importance of strong, sustainable food practices and values.



# About

Fermentation on Wheels was born in Oregon's Willamette Valley in May 2013. The founder of this traveling project, a culinary artist named Tara Whitsitt, converted a 1986 International Harvester school bus into a fermentation lab and workshop space during the summer of 2013, departing from Eugene, Oregon last October.

Whitsitt teaches vegetable-fermentation workshops that correspond with the regional and seasonal produce of each destination. She also spearheads "starter culture" exchanges, which encourage people to try new and different fermented foods, while sharing the history, science, and stories of food cultures she acquires along the road.



Since its departure in October 2013, Fermentation on Wheels has traveled over 5,000 miles, holding free educational workshops and culture exchanges in schools, community centers, and at festivals. The project has also collaborated with other innovative organizations and businesses such as FoodCorps, Fermenters Club, and Edible Communities, as well as dozens of farms and homesteads. Workshops target communities of all ages and socioeconomic levels, teaching attendees how to create nutritious, pro-biotic foods through the simple art of fermentation.

# Fermentation

## WHAT IS IT?

Fermentation is the transformation of food from its raw or cooked state to a preserved form that has a complex, unique flavor profile due to the microbial action that develops within the food during the process. This microbial action creates a food that is teeming with good bacteria. The final products are super-foods also known as pro-biotics. Yoghurt is a good common example of a fermented food we consume that is helpful for replenishing good bacteria in our system.

## WHY FERMENTATION?

Microbe-rich fermented foods & drinks offer a healthy alternative to the more widely available processed foods that are consumed in America today. When we introduce good bacteria to our bodies, we strengthen our gut, improve immunity, and better our digestive health. We encourage a food culture that promotes diversity and health in the human biome. Many people believe the myth that fermenting on your own is dangerous and difficult. We want to break the myth by increasing access to fermentation education.



# Frequently Asked Questions

## How do I find out when you'll be in my area?

Our website is regularly updated with upcoming events. Please visit our online schedule page or follow us on Facebook to find out where we are and where we'll be.

## What is the pricing for your events?

All of our public events are by donation, however, if you would like to book us for a private event, we ask for a minimum donation. The minimum varies based on the event. Please contact us at [info@fermentationonwheels.com](mailto:info@fermentationonwheels.com) to further discuss pricing and workshop options.

## How is Fermentation on Wheels funded?

Mostly through workshop donations, but we are also fiscally sponsored by a 501(c)(3) arts organization. Through sponsorship, we are eligible for an array of grants and can receive tax-deductible donations. If you are interested in becoming a sponsor contact [tara@fermentationonwheels.com](mailto:tara@fermentationonwheels.com).

## How much notice is needed to schedule a workshop?

If we'll be in your area and have an opening, it's possible we can pull off something impromptu. Otherwise, we ask that you contact us to make arrangements at least 2 months in advance.

## How do I obtain a starter culture from the bus?

If you join us at an event we will gladly offer you a starter culture from our collection. Donations of goods or money are greatly appreciated in return. We do not ship starter cultures.



# Press Release

For Immediate Release

## “Fermentation on Wheels” Mobile Education Project Moves Forward to the Carolinas

*By March 7, 2014*  
*March 7, 2014*

**Raleigh, NC**– Tara Whitsitt of Fermentation on Wheels will conduct food fermentation workshops through the Carolinas March 19th through April 7th. The educator plans to hold several donation-based workshops, youth classes, and community potlucks along a route from Beaufort, SC to Asheville, NC. These events serve as a way to bridge communities and restore a genuine fascination and interest in local, traditionally-preserved foods.

Fermentation on Wheels ([www.fermentationonwheels.com](http://www.fermentationonwheels.com)) is a creative education and food-preservation project born in Oregon’s Willamette Valley. The founder of this traveling project, a culinary artist named Tara Whitsitt, converted a 1986 International Harvester school bus into a fermentation lab and workshop space in the summer of 2013, departing from Eugene, Oregon last October. Whitsitt teaches vegetable-fermentation workshops that correspond with the regional and seasonal produce of each destination. She spearheads “starter culture” exchanges, which encourage people to try new and different fermented foods, while sharing the history, science, and stories of food cultures she acquires along the road in each new town.

The mobile education project is a charitable organization sponsored by a non-profit in New York City. Events are free, hands-on, and open to the public. In four months, Fermentation on Wheels has made 31 stops in seven different states, giving the benefits of live cultured food to anyone interested in learning how to do it in their own kitchen.

Whitsitt describes her mission as an effort to, “support micro-agriculture and local economy, focus on sustainable, organic foods that improve and teach healthfulness, and promote the use of fermentation to preserve farm-fresh foods that can be enjoyed year-round.”

Fermentation on Wheels is currently scheduling events in Beaufort, SC, Charleston, SC, Wilmington, NC, Raleigh, NC, Charlotte, NC, and Asheville, NC, while making stops at local farms in between. Thus far on the schedule, Whitsitt will teach about vegetable-ferments and sourdough starter at Beaufort Memorial Hospital in conjunction with SILO on March 20th at 6p.m. The bus will also make an appearance at a FoodCorps service member’s youth cooking class in Wilmington, NC. In Asheville, NC, Green Hill Urban has invited the project to hold a culture exchange, workshop, and potluck the weekend of April 4th-6th. The fermenter is now working on securing dates for events in Charleston, Raleigh, and Charlotte.

The schedule and further information can be found by following links at [www.fermentationonwheels.com](http://www.fermentationonwheels.com).

# Events



## CULTURE SWAP

A brief forum on starter cultures and tour of the bus. Attendees may bring starter cultures of their own for exchange & discussion as well as bring an empty jar and take a culture home. We ask for a minimum \$5 donation for culture take home (unless otherwise arranged).

## GET CULTURED!

Celebrates the uniqueness of the starter culture. A collection of kefir, tibicos, sourdough, and kombucha are presented to the audience. In this workshop, we discuss ferments that require inoculation - their history, how to feed them, and the delicious transformative foods they create. Followed by a tour of/starter culture swap on the bus.

## FERMENTING BY SEASON

Teach & prepare a wild-yeast ferment with local, seasonal ingredients. This workshop is process-based and hands-on, with a focus on culinary creativity and troubleshooting. Followed by a tour of/starter culture swap on the bus.

## KIMCHI AND SOURDOUGH STARTER MAINTENANCE

The history of and how to make kimchi joined with the maintenance of one of our most loved starter cultures: sourdough.

## PRESENTATION AND POTLUCK

A fermented food-themed potluck joined by a 30-45 minute talk. The talk starts with an introduction of the what, how & why of Fermentation on Wheels and then about fermentation. Questions are encouraged. We follow the potluck and talk with a tour of and starter culture swap on the bus.

# Living Foods Exploration Lesson Plan



*“Not only is it a very simple way to live, but it is sustainable too. We call this way of living community.”*



## INTRODUCTION

I am from Eugene, OR – a small town in the Northwest United States many miles from here. I have driven to Washington DC to connect with others who believe in a better way of eating & living, as well as building a sustainable future.

I grow food in a garden and make delicious, healthy foods in my home. My friends have other talents that are equally valuable. We live together because we realize the value of having our different talents in one home, where we share food and otherwise keep the house in order. It is such a good life that I teach other people about it. Not only is it a very simple way to live, but it is sustainable too. We call this way of living community.

**Instructor:** Tara Whitsitt of Fermentation on Wheels

**Ages/Grade Level:** K-8

**Time:** 1 hour

**Prep Time:** 45 minutes (Prepare sourdough starter, water kefir for tasting, and sauerkraut. Prepare seating on bus or in outdoor school garden or indoor classroom)

**Materials:**

- Dixie cups for tasting
- Forks for tasting
- Jars containing cultures
- Wooden spoons for stirring
- Prepared sauerkraut
- Food magazines/FoW drawings on tables for perusal

**Topics/Goals/Learning Objectives:**

- learn what microorganisms are and how they are important for our health
- understand the difference between living and non-living foods.
- sample living, probiotic foods.

# LESSON/ACTIVITIES



## 1 Classroom discussion

- Discussion of living vs. non-living. Can they think of examples from the garden? What is the smallest living thing you can think of?
- Introduce the word “microorganism.” They are so small, that we can’t see them without a microscope. There are different types of microorganisms: some are bad for us, but many are good for us. They help with our digestion. They also protect us from getting sick because they kill bad germs inside of us.
- Today we are going to try foods and beverages that are alive, or “living foods.” This is because they have millions of helpful microorganisms in them. Because of these tiny creatures, these living foods are not only super healthy, but also incredibly delicious. These foods are also all fermented, which means that they have been transformed by these healthy microorganisms.
- Today we are going to talk about three types of living foods: sourdough, kefir, and sauerkraut.



## 2

### Taste Testing

- Lay out tasting agreements. It's not polite to make a face or say that something is gross because your classmate may like it. Show your peers respect. If you try it and don't like it, that's okay. You don't have to finish your taste or have seconds.
- **Sourdough starter;** Talk about what it's made of. Pass around while stirring for students to smell. Ask students for observation. Have students ever baked bread or seen someone bake bread (or rolls, pizza dough, pancakes, etc.). Does this smell like bread to you? What happens to bread dough when you let it sit out and then bake it? [It puffs up/rises! Why? Because there are living microorganisms (yeasts) that produce gas to make it rise]
- **Water kefir;** Compare water kefir to juice. Ask students if they have ever tried juice. What does juice taste like? (Is it salty? Sweet? What makes the juice sweet?) Talk about how the kefir grains are living; they eat the sugars in the juice and produce natural carbonation, making this like a healthy, living soda.
- **Kombucha;** Talk about the kombucha mother. Kombucha is fermented sweet tea. Give students a sample of kombucha.
- Take out the sauerkraut. Pass around the jar and ask students to make observations on the smell, colors, etc. Talk briefly about the process to make sauerkraut. The good microorganisms in the air and on the leaves of the cabbage turn raw cabbage into a delicious fermented food. Give students samples of sauerkraut.



3

### **Wrap-up/questions/tour of the bus**

- Review what a microorganism is and why living, fermented foods are good for our bodies.
- Give students and teachers a quick tour of the bus.
- Answer any questions they may have.

4

**Leave preferred culture with the class**, including instructions for how to care for the culture as well as an experiments if the teacher and students are interested in further pursuing fermentation and starter cultures.



# Praise

“



“I had such a great time working with Tara last year that I joined her the next spring in some of her travels throughout North Carolina and Tennessee. Tara’s dedication to teaching the craft of food fermentation is wonderful, and what inspired me even more is her infectious “do-what-you-love” spirit. What a happier world it would be if more people followed their bliss like Tara!”

Austin Durant, Founder, Fermenters Club, San Diego, CA

“I was amazed at how many projects were going on in this small and well organized space – a whole world of fermented delights traveling around the country. I was impressed by Tara’s dedication and passion for this project, her vision and planning, along with her relaxed and very informative style of teaching, sharing her knowledge, craft, and skills with us; we were all inspired.”

Ausmaminae Wonson, Avalon Organic Gardens and Eco-Village, Tumacacori, Arizona



# Praise

“



“Our visit with Tara this spring was such an amazing experience! Fermentation on Wheels is an amazing part of a fantastic trend to get away from factory-produced food and move toward the old, natural, and far superior foodstuff fermented by our ancestors. We are so grateful that her path led her to us.”

**Dorsey Barger, Co-Owner, Hausbar Farms and Guesthaus, Austin, TX**



“Tara’s visit left the Co-op bubbling over with fermentation enthusiasm. Everyone learned a little something - from our fresh first-time picklers to us sour old cultures. Her bus brought more than just superior craftsmanship and information, it was a delivery of well-cured cultural cross-pollination that gave us new recipe ideas as well as a renewed zest for our closets full of crocks.”

**Patrick Jerome, Chief Fermenter, Rainbow Food Coop, Jackson, MS**



“I have been fermenting for a few years now and Tara opened my eyes to different aspects of this fine craft; she also shared some really awesome culture starters with me, filled with a rich histories. Most fermenters in this country live and breathe Sandor Katz’s books, and Tara was a fresh breath of air.”

**Marion Sansing, Southern Cultured, Starkville, MS**



“Tara’s knowledge, passion, and engaging story captivated my young students. After an afternoon making and tasting sauerkraut with Tara, everyone went home with an ear-to-ear smile and a new favorite food.”

**Tim Williams, FoodCorps Service Member, Feast Down East, Wilmington, NC**

# Praise



“Tara came to Double N Urban Farm in early April and we having haven’t stopped fermenting since. She is filled with so much knowledge and her passion is contagious. She taught us so much and showed us ferments we had never seen. Our time with her was an incredibly valuable tool in the preservation methods our farm is using now. ”

**Nicole Mattingly, Farmer, Double N Urban Farm, Nashville, TN**



‘Tara is a force, crusading through time and geographical space she proselytizes the evolving human relationship with fermented foods and the simple beauty of controlled rot. Fermentation on Wheels is a living breathing work of art devoted to teaching others about food, sustainability, and community. Her visit has resonated in Baltimore inspiring others to ferment, plant, and teach.’

**Meaghan & Shane Carpenter, HEX Ferments, Baltimore, MD**



“I am very excited about using my new skills, tools, and resources in my own fermentation practice. I would recommend Tara’s workshops to both newbies and avid fermentation practitioners alike--her work is accessible and beneficial to a wide array of communities! ”

**Lauren Nixon, Food Educator with Urban Nutrition Initiative, Philadelphia, PA**



“Tara demystifies fermentation in a way that allows the average person to develop sustainable methods of incorporating fermentation into their daily life.”

**Alison Morgan, Acupuncturist, Pennington, NJ**

“Lots of wonderful information and hands-on opportunities to bolster our confidence to actually be able to do this. Tara’s work is so inspiring.”

**Jennifer Frick, Workshop Attendee, Portland, ME**

# Press

Episode 78 - Rolling, Rolling, Rolling... Keep those Ferments Rolling (JUNE 2014) / Fuhmentaboutit! on Heritage Radio Network

Fermentation on Wheels bus rolling toward Asheville (MAR 2014) / Citizen Times

Fermentation on Wheels: Bringing Culture(s) to the People (FEB 2014) / Civil Eats

School bus-turned-fermentation station rolls through Austin (JAN 2014) / Relish Austin

Fermentation on Wheels Interview (DEC 2013) / Side Street Projects

“TARA WHITSITT - FERMENTATION ON WHEELS” (SEPT 2013) / The ECO CHEF on Blog Talk Radio

Fermentation: Bad Food, Still Good (AUG 2013) / The Savory





## Fermentation on Wheels: Bringing Culture(s) to the People

By Tove Danovich on February 25, 2014

Last August, 28-year-old Tara Whitsitt took a vintage school bus and filled it with fermented foods, live cultures, and a “fermentation station” before setting out on a yearlong project to travel the United States. In just six months, Fermentation on Wheels has already made 27 stops in six different states.

The idea for Fermentation on Wheels came to Whitsitt in a dream. Literally. She had been experimenting with what she calls “micro-agriculture” on a largely self-taught basis when she dreamed—three nights in a row—that she was driving around in a school bus, making foods like sauerkraut, kimchee, and kombucha. While most of us might have wondered if we were spending too much time on our new hobby, Whitsitt was inspired to turn her dream into a real educational project.

The goal of Fermentation on Wheels is to give the benefits of live cultured food to anyone interested in learning how to do it themselves. And a school bus helps Whitsitt reach a wide array of people. Many small organizations have adopted a mobile model for teaching people about healthy food, urban farming, and even cooking. It’s cheaper than renting a brick and mortar classroom and easier to bring to the communities that wouldn’t otherwise have access to such education. In the case of Fermentation on Wheels, the bus has also given Whitsitt a home as she travels across country.

Often, Whitsitt stops at small farms and uses their produce (or, in a recent stop, the milk from a goat dairy) as inspiration for classes on turning it into foods like kimchi or kefir. After class, she hosts “culture exchanges” where people can give and/or receive sourdough starters, kombucha starters, and more.

“I collect a lot of cultures and I’ll feed them at a workshop and give them out to people,” said Whitsitt. She has also hosted events and workshops at spaces like Impact Hub and The Solar Living Institute and collaborated with members of the Fermenters Club on the West Coast last fall before heading across the southern part of the country. (She was spotted at HausBar Farms in Austin in January.)

Though the art of fermentation has been around for centuries, it has only recently been making a comeback. Not only are many bacteria present in live cultures good for our guts—the highly touted yogurt culture *Lactobacillus acidophilus* is an excellent example—but they also pre-digest food, making it easier on our own digestive systems. Fermented vegetables also last longer than fresh, making these foods great for farmers looking to sell value-added product and backyard growers wanting to put their harvest to good use.

*continued on next page* .....→

# CIVIL EATS

*(continued)*

“These foods will last for a very long time, depending on how you store them,” said Whitsitt. More importantly, she adds, yeasts and cultures, “transform our food into something special, delicious and super nutritious.”

Like heritage seeds, many of Whitsitt’s starters come with quite a story. One favorite is a 10-year-old rye sourdough starter that was given to her by a friend in Brooklyn. According to the story he told her, he’d started it in Portland, Oregon, and traveled with it by train—feeding it every day. “It’s one of the most incredible starters ever—hard to kill and super resilient,” she said.

Whitsitt is clearly the most active force behind Fermentation on Wheels, but she wants to share the project as widely as possible. “Fermentation on Wheels is a community,” she said. Her goal is for people to join on and make the project their own.

A week ago, the project secured non-profit sponsorship through a fiscal sponsor in New York City. Until now, the bulk of the costs have come out of Whitsitt’s own pocket. With the ability to accept tax-deductible donations, she’s hoping to bring in more volunteers and outside supporters. She’s especially looking for people interested in helping with class and/or joining her on the road.

Fermentation on Wheels is currently rolling through Mississippi, making stops at places like Native Son Produce Farm in Tupelo on February 28 and The Mississippi Modern Homestead Center on March 2. As her exact class locations are decided via invitation or suggestions from host-farmers or participants in her classes, Fermentation on Wheels’ schedule is more of a rough guideline.

See more at:

<http://civileats.com/2014/02/25/fermentation-on-wheels-bringing-cultures-to-the-people/#sthash.qx5CVF9w.dpuf>



# Contact

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