3 Methods of Getting Microbes Into Your Product

"Using micro-organisms to improve flavor, digestibility and shelf-life"

Spontaneous Fermentation

Microbes already present - just let them work

Examples

- Vegetable ferments
- Sourdough starter
- Farm cider

✓ Pros

- ✓ Cheap & easy
- ✓ 'Natural' process
- ✓ Varied flavors

✗ Cons

- ✗ Doesn't always work
- ✗ Limited control
- ✗ Potentially unsafe

Safety

Control

Cost

Flavor Variety

Backslopping / "Stealing"

Using microbes from existing fermented products

Examples

- Yogurt
- Kefir grains
- Tempeh

✓ Pros

- ✓ Still cheap & easy
- ✓ More control than wild
- ✓ Access to exotic cultures

✗ Cons

- ✗ "Weak-ass supermarket microbes"
- ✗ Products may be dead
- ✗ Composition may drift

Safety

Control

Cost

Flavor Variety

Starter Cultures

Concentrated, specific cultures

Examples

- Miso, koji, natto
- Wine yeasts
- Specialized cheese cultures

✓ Pros

- ✓ High control & reliability
- ✓ Very safe
- ✓ Many exotic options

✗ Cons

- ✗ More expensive
- ✗ Cheating?
- ✗ Sometimes less varied

Safety

Control

Cost

Flavor Variety