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Fermented Foods, the Gut Microbiome and Human Health

Guest Editors:

Prof. Dr. Francesca De Filippis

Department of Agricultural Sciences, University of Naples Federico II, Naples, Italy

Prof. Dr. Ilario Ferrocino

Department of Agricultural, Forest and Food Sciences, DISAFA, University of Torino, Torino, Italy

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Message from the Guest Editors

The human body is home to at least 100 trillion microorganisms, most of them inhabiting the human gut. Host–microbe interactions, such as immune modulation, and environmental factors, such as dietary habits, have been major drivers of the co-evolution of the human host–gut microbiome symbiosis. In particular, fermented foods usually contain live microbes and can be considered an unexplored reservoir of new probiotics or beneficial microorganisms. Indeed, besides transforming the substrates during fermentation, the food microbiome is also able to produce beneficial metabolites, such as vitamins or anti-inflammatory molecules. However, it remains unknown what fraction of the food microbiome is actively transferred to the gut, whether food strains are transient or able to colonize the human gut upon ingestion and what role they play in human health. The consumption of fermented foods has been associated with several health-promoting effects, although contrasting results are reported and their role in modulating the gut microbiome deserves further exploration.



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Editor-in-Chief

Prof. Dr. Arun K. Bhunia

1. Department of Food Science,
Purdue University, West
Lafayette, IN, USA

2. Department of Comparative
Pathobiology (Courtesy), Purdue
University, West Lafayette, IN,
USA

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Foods Editorial Office
MDPI, Grosspeteranlage 5
4052 Basel, Switzerland

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