

*Text from poster presented at the Great Exhibition Road Festival 2022 by the Institute of Infection at Imperial College.*

## **Microbes in food**

Microbes perform chemical reactions that turns sugars and starch in food into chemicals like lactic acid (which is sour), alcohol, carbon dioxide, and hydrogen gas. This is called fermentation. Many of our favourite foods and drinks are fermented. Can you imagine a world without some of these?!

### **In the pantry**

- Pickles
- Olives
- Soy sauce
- Chocolate: Cocoa beans are fermented which helps to develop the chocolatey flavour.
- Marmite
- Bread

### **Drinks**

- Fizzy drinks: Fizzy drinks contain citric acid, which is produced by a fungus. Citric acid is a preservative and a flavouring agent.
- Beer and wine: Yeast transforms sugars in fruits and grains into alcohol and carbon dioxide gas.

### **In the fridge**

- Yoghurt: Milk is broken down by bacteria to make yoghurt. It makes it less perishable, thicker, changes the flavour, and contains less lactose (which makes it easier to digest).
- Sour Cream
- Cheese: Holey cheese is made using a bacteria (the holes come from the carbon dioxide). Blue cheeses are made using blue mould (fungus).