

2/12/2021

Winter Pickles
by Summer Brasuel
UCCE Master Food Preservers of El Dorado County

Pickles are any produce that is highly acidified either using vinegar (also known as quick process pickles) or acidified using a fermentation process.

Flavoring pickles can easily be customized. Dried herbs and spices do not affect the safety of a tested pickle recipe. If you do not like dill, maybe you would prefer to substitute Italian seasonings, Mexican seasonings, or even curry.

Other fun ways to safely customize your home preserved pickles is to change the type of vinegar. Maybe change a white vinegar to a cider vinegar for sweeter taste. It is important is to make sure the vinegar you use is 5% acidity or more. The level of acidity is on the label. Be aware that in recent years some bargain brand vinegars are less than 5% acidity. Always read the label.

When using cider vinegar, make sure it is not "cider flavored" vinegar. Although there is not a safety issue related to "cider flavored" vinegar we think the flavor is inferior to real cider vinegar. Again, read the label carefully.

Here is a fun winter pickle project:

Spicy Red Cabbage

Source: Ball Complete Book of Home Preserving

Yield: about 5 quarts or 10 pints

12 lbs of red cabbage(3-4heads), cored and shredded
½ cup canning or pickling salt
¼ cup whole cloves
¼ cup whole allspice
¼ cup whole peppercorns
¼ cup celery seed
2 cinnamon sticks, each about 4 inches and broken into pieces.
8 cups of red wine vinegar (5% acidity)
1 cup light brown sugar ½ cup mustard seed
¼ cup mace or nutmeg

Day 1

In a large crock, glass or stainless steel bowl, layer cabbage and salt. Cover and let stand in a cool place for 24 hours

Day 2

Transfer cabbage to a colander placed over the sink and drain. Rinse with cool running water. Leave in colander for 1 hour to drain then place on trays lined with paper towels to dry, about 6 hours.

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Prepare canner, jars and lids.

Tie cloves, allspice, peppercorns, celery seeds and cinnamon stick pieces in a square of cheesecloth. Creating a spice bag.

In a large stainless steel saucepan, combine vinegar, brown sugar, mustard seeds, mace (or nutmeg) and the spice bag. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat, stirring to dissolve sugar. Reduce heat and boil gently for 5 minutes, until spices have infused the liquid. Discard spice bag.

Pack the cabbage into hot jars to within a generous ½ inch. Ladle hot pickling liquid into jars to cover the cabbage, leaving ½ inch headspace. Remove air bubbles and adjust headspace, if necessary, by adding more liquid. Wipe jar rims clean with a damp cloth. Center lid on jar. Screw band down until resistance is met, then increase to fingertip-tight.

Process for 20 minutes = 0-1000ft, 25 minutes = 1001-6000ft, 30 minutes = above 6000 ft.

Half a batch yields about 6 pints. Each pint takes about 1 cup of brine. You might need to make extra!

Process in a boiling water canner or atmospheric steam canner for 10 minutes 0-1000 ft., 15 minutes 1001-6000 ft., 20 minutes above 6000 ft.

For boiling water canning, turn off the heat, remove canner lid and wait 5 minutes.

For atmospheric steam canning, turn off the heat, leave canner lid on and wait 2-3 minutes.

In response to Coronavirus (COVID-19) and recent California Department of Public Health and El Dorado County Health & Human Services guidelines, UCCE Central Sierra canceled all Master Food Preserver and Master Gardener public events and classes in El Dorado and Amador County. This cancellation remains in effect through August, and will be updated as public health guidelines change.

Stay safe and follow recommended health and sanitation practices in the coming weeks.

UCCE Master Food Preservers are available to answer home food preservation questions; leave a message on our helpline at (530) 621-5506. For more information about our public education classes and activities or to make a donation, go to the UCCE Master Food Preservers of El Dorado County website at <http://ucanr.edu/edmfpp>. Sign up to receive our E-Newsletter at <http://ucanr.edu/mfpcsenews>.

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