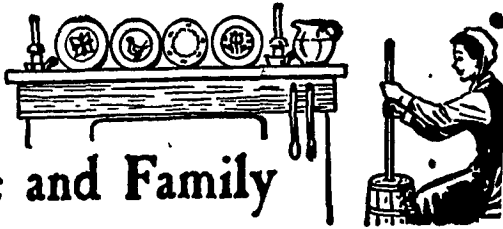


For the Farm Wife and Family



Homemade Pickles and Relishes

By Mrs. Richard C. Spence

There are four general classes of pickle products:

Fruit pickles, in which the fruit is usually left whole and simmered in a sweet-sour syrup. Pears, peaches, and crabapples are prepared in this way.

Relishes such as piccalilli, chili sauce, catsup, and chutney, in which fruits and vegetables are chopped, seasoned, and cooked to the desired consistency.

Fermented pickles, including cucumbers, green tomatoes, and sauerkraut, which go through a 2- to 4-week fermentation.

Fresh-pack or quick-process pickles such as bread-and-butter pickles and Kosher-style dills, which are brined for several hours or overnight, drained, and combined with boiling-hot vinegar, spices, and other seasonings.

FOR SUCCESSFUL PICKLING

Top-quality pickle products can be obtained only when good-quality ingredients are used and the proper methods are followed. Correct proportions of fruit or vegetable, sugar, salt, vinegar, and spices are of great importance. Use tested recipes and measure or weigh ingredients accurately.

INGREDIENTS

Fruit and vegetables — Use only good-quality fruits and vegetables. Select tender vegetables and firm, ripe fruit. Pears and peaches may be slightly underripe for pickling. Waxed cucumbers are not suitable for pickling whole because the brine cannot penetrate. Sort for uniformity of size and select the size best suited for the recipe being followed.

Salt — Use pure granulated salt if available. Table salt can be used but may not give as good results because of the materials added to prevent caking. Do not use iodized table salt as it may darken pickles.

Vinegar — Use a high-grade cider or white distilled vinegar of 4 to 6 percent acidity. Cider vinegar with its mellow acid taste gives a better blending of flavors but it may darken white or light-colored fruits and vegetables. White distilled vinegar has a sharper, more pungent acetic acid taste, but it is desirable when color is important, as with pickled pears, onions, and cauliflower. Do not dilute the vinegar unless the recipe so specifies. If a less sour product is preferred, add sugar rather than decrease vinegar.

Spices — For best flavor in pickles, be sure the spices used are fresh. Whole spices are preferred for pickle making; ground spices may darken the product. Tie the spices in a piece of clean, thin white cloth, such as cheesecloth, large enough to allow for circulation of liquid during cooking, and remove them before packing the pickles in jars.

Sugar — Either white granulated or brown sugar may be used. White sugar gives a clearer color, but brown sugar may be preferred for flavor.

EQUIPMENT

Utensils — For heating pickling liquids, use utensils of glass, unchipped enamelware, stainless steel, or aluminum. Do not use copper, brass, galvanized, or iron utensils; these metals may react with acids or salts and cause undesirable color changes in the pickles or form undesirable compounds.

For brining, use a crock or stone jar, enamel-lined utensils, or large glass jar, bowl, or casserole. To cover vegetables while they are in the brine a heavy plate or large glass lid that fits inside the container will be needed, together with a weight to hold the cover down so that the vegetables are kept below the surface of the brine. A glass jar filled with water makes a good weight. Spoons should be of wood or stainless steel.

Heat treatment — Pickle products require heat treatment to destroy organisms that cause spoilage and to inactivate enzymes that may affect flavor, color, and texture. For most types of pickles adequate heating is best achieved by processing the filled jars in a water-bath canner at 212 degrees. Some products, such as

piccalilli, chili sauce, sour pickles, and watermelon pickles, which either have a very high sugar or vinegar content and are cooked for a long period in an open kettle at boiling temperature, do not require processing in a boiling-water bath. They may be packed boiling hot in clean hot jars, and sealed without further heat treatment.

To process pickles in boiling-water bath — Pack pickles into glass jars according to directions in the recipe. Immerse the jars into actively boiling water in canner or deep kettle; be sure the water comes an inch or two over the jar tops. Cover the container tightly, bring water back to boiling as quickly as possible. Start to count processing time and boil gently and steadily for the processing time recommended for the food you are canning. Remove jars immediately to a wire rack, setting them several inches apart to cool.

Processing procedures for fermented cucumbers have been slightly modified from the usual water-bath procedure to avoid development of a cooked flavor and loss of crispness. For the fermented cucumbers, start to count the processing time as soon as fill-

ed jars are placed in the canner in actively boiling water.

FERMENTED DILL PICKLES

20 pounds (about ½ bushel) cucumbers, 3½ to 5½ inches in length
¾ cup whole mixed pickling spices
2 to 3 bunches fresh dill
2 cups vinegar
1½ cups salt, pure granulated
2 gallons water

Cover cucumbers with cold water. Wash thoroughly using a vegetable brush, handling gently to avoid bruising. Take care to remove any blossoms. Drain on rack or wipe dry.

Place half the pickle spices and a layer of dill in a 5-gallon crock or stone jar. Fill with cucumbers to 3 or 4 inches from top of crock. Mix well the vinegar, salt, and water and pour over the cucumbers. Place a layer of dill and remaining spices over the top of cucumbers. (Garlic may be added, if desired.)

Cover with a heavy china or glass plate or lid that fits inside the crock and use a weight, such as a glass jar filled with water on top of the cover to keep cucumbers under the brine. Cover loosely with clean cloth. Keep pickles at room temperature and remove

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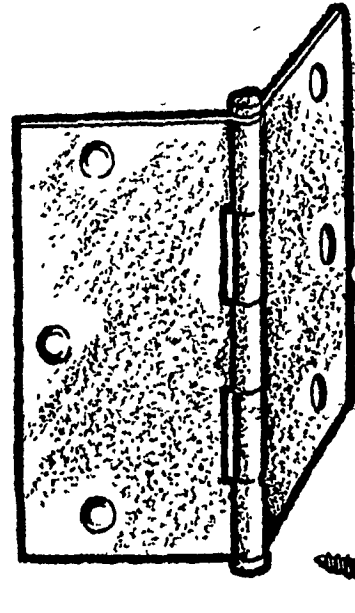
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