

Bread And Butter Pickles

Kathy's Note: You can make one small batch or a huge batch of these sweet and spiced pickles. Look for fresh crisp cucumbers.

Ingredients:

1 pound cucumbers, washed and cut into just less than 1-inch thick slices
1 medium onion, peeled and thinly sliced
2 cups apple cider vinegar
3/4 cup water
1 teaspoon brown mustard seeds
1 teaspoon yellow mustard seeds
1 teaspoon coriander seeds
1 small dried red chile
1/2 cup light brown sugar
3 sprigs fresh dill

Instructions:

Place cucumbers and onions in a large bowl. Cover with ice cold water, 2 cups ice, and 1/4 cup Kosher or canning salt. Stir well and let sit at room temperature for 1 hour.

Drain the cucumbers and onions and rinse with cold water. Drain again.

Boil the vinegar, water, mustard and coriander seeds, chile, and sugar over high heat. Add the cucumber and onions and cook 2 minutes. Add the vegetables to a quart jar or 2 pint size jars and add the dill to glass jar. Let cool and seal. Refrigerate for up to several months. Makes one quart jar of pickles.

Chile Dilly Beans

Kathy's Note: Dilly beans are pickled green beans with generous amounts of fresh dill and dill seed. You can also make Chilly Dilly Beans by adding small chile peppers. The beans will pickle in the refrigerator and keep for several months or can be processed in sterile Mason jars for around 15 minutes or until the lids are sealed. To learn more about safe canning practices go to Ball Jar Blue Book:

<http://www.freshpreserving.com/home.aspx>

Ingredients:

1 1/2 pounds crisp fresh green beans, washed, dried and trimmed to fit your jars*
About 1/4 cup fresh dill heads and dill fronds**
2 teaspoons dill seed
2 teaspoons black peppercorns

2 cloves garlic, cut in half, optional
4 small red chiles, left whole, optional
About 2 cups apple cider vinegar (5% acidity)
2 cups water
1 1/2 tablespoons pickling or canning sea salt or (not too expensive) sea salt
*Place one bean in your jar and trim it. Use that bean as an indicator for cutting the remaining beans.
**Dill heads are the tops of the dill plant. Ask at your farmer's market or simply use fresh dill.

Instructions:

Place the beans into 2 sterilized quart jars or 4 pint-size jars. Divide the fresh dill, dill seed, peppercorns, garlic, and chile between the jars.

Meanwhile in a non-reactive medium size saucepan mix the vinegar, water, and salt, and bring to a boil over high heat. Pour the boiling mixture on top of the beans, making sure not to fill the jars completely but leave about 1/2 inch headspace. Cover with lids and let cool.

Process for 15 minutes following instructions for safe canning or, when cool, place in the refrigerator. Let pickle for at least a week before eating.

Pickled Peppers

Kathy's Note: You can use any combination of peppers you like, depending on how spicy you like your pickles – jalapenos and other chile peppers, or red, yellow or green sweet peppers.

Ingredients:

2 cups cider vinegar
1 cup white wine
1 tablespoon peppercorns
1 tablespoon canning or pickling salt
2 tablespoon sugar
1 tablespoon fennel seeds
1 tablespoon mustard seeds -- yellow or brown or a combination
14 small chile peppers, left whole, or 2-3 sweet peppers, cored and cut into slices or wedges, or a combination

Instructions:

In a non-reactive saucepan mix the vinegar, wine, peppercorns, salt, sugar, and mustard seeds and bring to a boil.

Place the peppers into one or two mason or glass jars, arranging them in an attractive pattern. Pour the hot brine on top, and let cool. Seal and keep in the refrigerator for several months.

Pickled Stone Fruits

Kathy's Note: I used a combination of local, just-picked, *almost* fully ripe peaches and plums. These pickled fruit slices are delicious served with a cheese plate, on top of salads, or chopped and added to vinaigrette.

Ingredients:

2 cups stone fruit, peeled or unpeeled, cut into thin slices or chunks, peaches, plums, nectarines, or a combination
½ cup white wine vinegar
½ cup white wine
1/3 cup water
1 tablespoon pickling spices*
1 tablespoon black peppercorns

Instructions:

In a medium non-reactive pot mix the vinegar, wine, water, pickling spices and peppercorns and bring to a boil over high heat.

Place the fruit in a bowl and pour the boiling liquid on top. Add to mason or glass jars, cool and seal. Keep in the refrigerator for several months.

* Penzey's Pickling Spice Premium is very fresh and an excellent combination of yellow and brown mustard seeds, allspice, cracked cassia, bay leaves, dill seed, peppercorns, coriander, mace, juniper berries, cardamom and more. For more information contact: <http://www.penzeys.com/>

Pickled Cherries

Kathy's Note: We tend not to think about fruit and pickles in the same sentence, but we should. Pickled cherries are excellent, spiked with star anise, Sichuan peppercorns, a touch of salt and sugar. Serve with cheese platters, meat, or sprinkle onto salads.

Ingredients:

1 ½ cups cherries, cut the cherry in half, and remove pits
1 ¼ cups white or red wine vinegar
½ cup white or red wine
1 tablespoons Kosher or pickling salt
1 teaspoon Sichuan peppercorns or regular peppercorns
2 star anise

2 tablespoons sugar

Instructions:

Pit the cherries and place in a clean glass jar.

In a medium saucepan heat the vinegar with the remaining ingredients and bring to a boil over high heat. Pour the hot mixture on top of the cherries, and let cool. Seal the jars tightly and refrigerate; use within a few months. Makes 1 ½ cups.