

It's Time to Start Pickling at Home

Whether you are a successful gardener, an overly ambitious farmers market shopper, or simply someone who loves a little tangy zing on their tacos, burgers, barbecue, grain bowls, sandwiches, and salads, you need pickles in your pantry and refrigerator. Pickles are simple to make at home and a great way to add a tart pop of flavor to your cooking. Here's how to start pickling at home and enjoy a taste of summer all year round.

Before you worry about canning procedures and brine ratios, start with the simplest pickles which require just a few ingredients and minimal prep. At their most basic level, pickles are a vegetable or fruit marinated in a brine, which is a mixture of salt, sugar, vinegar and spices. Onions are a great place to start. They make a great addition to salads, grain bowls, sandwiches, tacos, or another savory dish that could use a bit of zing. Pickled onions will last a week or more in the refrigerator. Once you've pickled onions, feel free to experiment with other produce. The same process works for other refrigerator pickles, such as cucumbers, tomatoes, peppers and even fruit like peaches and plums.

If you have too much produce on hand, pickles are the answer. Make pickles in summer, and reap the benefits all year round. Making pickles is also a good way to use up any spices that are getting old or half empty bottles of vinegar you have on hand. Feel free to add them to your pickling brine to experiment with different flavor combinations. When you've eaten the pickles, the pickling brine can be reheated and reused one more time to make a new batch of onions. You can also put it to use in other ways by mixing it into marinades, salad dressings, sauces, or soups to brighten it up.

Once you've made pickles a few times, feel free to customize the flavors with just a few ingredient swaps. Play around with the spices and vinegars used in the brine for your pickles. You can swap in equal amounts of nigella seeds, cumin seeds, coriander seeds, or different types of peppercorns in your brine.

We hope that you found the information provided helpful and look forward to hearing from our Members on what produce they have experimented with. In the next issue we will take a closer look at how to process and can pickles so they are shelf stable, and store them in a cool, dark place so you can enjoy pickled vegetables in the middle of winter. If you have any questions you can always contact our Executive Sous Chef, Joe Boko at J.Boko@cornellclubnyc.com

Quick Pickled Red Onions

1 cup Apple Cider Vinegar
1 cup Rice Wine Vinegar
4 tablespoons Granulated Sugar
2 tablespoons Kosher Salt
2 tablespoons Pickling Spice
1 teaspoon Mustard Seeds
1 teaspoon Black Peppercorns
2 Bayleaves
5 stems Thyme
3 cloves of Garlic
Pinch Crushed Red Pepper Flakes
3 medium Red Onions, sliced into thin rings

1. Combine the vinegars, sugar, salt, spices and garlic in a medium nonreactive saucepan and bring to a boil. Nonreactive means to use cookware made of material that will not react with acidic ingredients. The most common nonreactive cookware is made with a stainless steel finish and will not discolor when used with acidic ingredients. Reactive metals such as unlined copper, raw aluminum, unlined tin and unseasoned cast iron should be avoided.
2. Layer the sliced onions in a mason jar or plastic container. Do not pack. Strain the brine into the jar and let the onions stand at room temperature until cooled. Then cover and store in the refrigerator for at least one day. The longer the onions pickle the more intense their flavor will become.