Pack a Pickled Product

The amount of acid in pickles is as important to their safety as it is to their taste and texture. For this reason, do not change the amounts of vinegar, vegetables or water in any recipe. Don’t use vinegar of unknown acidity. It is not safe to use homemade vinegar in pickling. Use only recipes with tested amounts of ingredients because there must be a minimum, uniform level of acid throughout all products to prevent the growth of botulinum bacteria. If botulinum bacteria are not destroyed, they can grow inside jars and produce the deadly toxin that causes botulism, a type of food poisoning that can be fatal.

Please refer to MU Extension publication GH1457, Food Preservation — In a Pickle, for more information on pickling ingredients, proper containers, and processing pickles in a boiling-water canner.

Instructions for specific products

**Sauerkraut**

- 25 pounds cabbage
- ¼ cup canning or pickling salt

**Yield:** About 9 quarts

**Quality:** Firm heads of fresh cabbage make the best sauerkraut. Shred cabbage and start kraut between 24 and 48 hours after harvest.

**Procedure:** Work with about 5 pounds of cabbage at a time. Discard outer leaves. Rinse heads under cold running water, and drain. Cut heads in quarters, and remove cores. Shred or slice to the thickness of a quarter.

Put cabbage in a suitable fermentation container (see MU Extension publication GH1457, Food Preservation — In a Pickle), and add 3 tablespoons of salt. Mix thoroughly with clean hands. Pack cabbage down firmly until salt draws out juices. Repeat shredding, salting and packing until all cabbage is in the container.

Be sure the container is deep enough so the packed, shredded cabbage is at least 4 or 5 inches below the rim. If juice does not cover cabbage, add boiled and cooled brine (1 ½ tablespoons of salt per quart of water).

Add plate and weight (see MU Extension publication GH1457, Food Preservation — In a Pickle, for ideas for acceptable weights); cover container with a clean bath towel. Store sauerkraut at 70 to 75 degrees F while it is fermenting. Kraut will be fully fermented in 3 to 4 weeks at temperatures between 70 and 75 degrees F.

At 60 to 65 degrees F, fermentation may take 5 to 6 weeks. Kraut may not ferment at temperatures lower than 60 degrees F. Above 75 degrees F, kraut may become soft.

If you weight the cabbage down with a brine-filled bag, don’t disturb the crock until normal fermentation is completed (when bubbling stops). If you use a jar as a weight, check the kraut two to three times each week and skim off scum if it forms.

Fully fermented kraut will keep tightly covered in the refrigerator for several months. Additionally, you can preserve kraut for longer using either of these methods:

**Hot pack:** Bring kraut and liquid slowly to a boil in a large kettle; stir frequently. Remove from heat and fill jars rather firmly with kraut and juices. Leave ½ inch of headspace. Adjust lids, and process as directed in Table 1.

**Raw pack:** Fill jars firmly with kraut and cover with juices. Leave ½ inch of headspace. Adjust lids, and process as directed in Table 1.

**Pickled dilled beans**

- 4 pounds fresh tender green or yellow beans (5 to 6 inches long)
- 8–16 heads fresh dill or 8 teaspoons dill seed
- 8 cloves garlic (optional)
- ½ cup canning or pickling salt
- 4 cups white vinegar (5 percent)
- 4 cups water
- 1 teaspoon hot red pepper flakes or cayenne pepper (optional)

**Yield:** About 8 pints

**Procedure:** Wash and trim ends from beans, and cut beans into 4-inch lengths. Put 1 to 2 dill heads (or 1 teaspoon dill seed) and 1 clove of garlic in each sterilized jar. Stand beans upright in jars. Leave ½ inch of headspace. Trim beans to fit the jar if necessary.

Mix salt, vinegar, water and pepper flakes or cayenne pepper. Bring to a boil and pour over beans. Leave ½ inch of headspace. Adjust lids, and process as directed in Table 1.

Reviewed by
Susan Mills-Gray, State Nutrition Specialist
Pickled beets

7 pounds beets, 2 to 2 1⁄2 inches around
4 cups vinegar (5 percent)
1 1⁄2 teaspoons canning or pickling salt
2 cups sugar
2 cups water
2 cinnamon sticks
12 whole cloves
4–6 onions, 2 to 2 1⁄2 inches around (optional)

Yield: About 8 pints


Procedure: Trim off beet tops. Leave 1 inch of stem and roots to prevent color from bleeding. Wash beets thoroughly and sort them for size. Cook similar sizes together by covering them with boiling water and cooking until tender, about 25 to 30 minutes.

Mix vinegar, salt, sugar and fresh water. Put spices in cheesecloth bag and add to vinegar mixture. Bring to a boil and add beets and onions. Simmer 5 minutes. Remove spice bag. Fill jars with beets and onions. Leave 1⁄2 inch of headspace. Add hot vinegar mixture, leaving 1⁄2 inch of headspace. Adjust lids, and process as directed in Table 1.

Variation: Pickle whole baby beets that are 1 to 1 1⁄2 inches around using the above directions. Pack whole. Onions can be left out.

Pickled cauliflower or Brussels sprouts

12 cups of 1- to 2-inch cauliflower florets or small Brussels sprouts
4 cups white vinegar (5 percent)
2 cups sugar
2 cups thinly sliced onions
1 cup diced sweet red peppers
2 tablespoons mustard seed
1 tablespoon celery seed
1 teaspoon turmeric
1 teaspoon hot red pepper flakes

Yield: About 9 half-pints

Procedure: Wash cauliflower and cut into flowerets. Wash Brussels sprouts and remove stems and damaged outer leaves. Boil in salt water (4 teaspoons canning salt per gallon of water). Boil cauliflower 3 minutes, and boil Brussels sprouts 4 minutes. Drain and cool.

Mix vinegar, sugar, onion, diced red pepper and spices in large saucepan. Bring to a boil, and simmer 5 minutes. Divide onion and diced pepper among jars. Fill jars with drained cauliflower or Brussels sprouts and hot pickling mixture. Leave 1⁄2 inch of headspace. Adjust lids, and process as directed in Table 1.

Pickled corn relish

10 cups fresh whole kernel corn (16 to 20 medium-size ears), or six 10-ounce packages of frozen corn
2 1⁄2 cups diced sweet red peppers
2 1⁄2 cups diced sweet green peppers
2 1⁄2 cups chopped celery
1 1⁄4 cups diced onions
1 1⁄4 cups sugar
5 cups vinegar (5 percent)
2 1⁄2 tablespoons canning or pickling salt
2 1⁄2 teaspoons celery seed
2 1⁄2 tablespoons dry mustard
1 1⁄4 teaspoons turmeric

Yield: About 9 pints

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*Safe processing time for altitudes only up to 3,000 feet.*
Procedure: Boil ears of corn 5 minutes. Dip in cold water and cut whole kernels from cob (do not scrape the cob) or use six 10-ounce packages of frozen corn (defrost in the refrigerator or in the microwave). Mix peppers, celery, onions, sugar, vinegar, salt and celery seed in a saucepan. Bring to a boil and simmer 5 minutes. Stir occasionally.

Mix mustard and turmeric with a small amount of the simmered mixture, and add back to the hot mixture along with the corn. Simmer another 5 minutes. If desired, thicken mixture with flour paste (¼ cup flour blended in ¼ cup water) and stir frequently. Fill jars with hot mixture. Leave ½-inch of headspace. Adjust lids, and process as directed in Table 1.

**Caution:** To avoid severe burns, wear rubber gloves when handling hot peppers. After handling peppers, wash hands thoroughly with soap and water before touching your face.

Procedure: Wash peppers. If small peppers are left whole, slash 2 to 4 slits in each. Quarter large peppers. To peel peppers, blanch in boiling water or blister as follows:

- **Oven or broiler method:** Put peppers in a hot oven (400 degrees F), or place under the broiler for 6 to 8 minutes or until skins blister.
- **Range-top method:** Cover hot burner, either gas or electric, with heavy wire mesh. Put peppers on burner for several minutes until skins blister.

Cool peppers in a pan covered with a damp cloth. This step makes it easier to peel the peppers.

Peel skin off cooled peppers. Flatten small peppers.

Fill jars, leaving ½ inch of headspace. Mix and heat other ingredients to boiling, and simmer 10 minutes. Remove garlic, and pour hot pickling mixture over peppers. Leave ½ inch of headspace. Adjust lids, and process as directed in Table 1.

**Reduced-sodium, sliced dill pickles**

4 pounds pickling cucumbers (3 to 5 inches long)  
6 cups vinegar (5 percent)  
6 cups sugar  
2 tablespoons canning or pickling salt  
1½ teaspoons celery seed  
1½ teaspoons mustard seed  
2 large onions, thinly sliced  
8 heads fresh dill  

**Yield:** About 8 pints  

Procedure: Wash cucumbers. Cut ¼-inch slice off blossom end and discard. Cut cucumbers into ¼-inch slices. Mix vinegar, sugar, salt, celery and mustard seeds in large saucepan and bring to a boil.

Put 2 slices of onion and ½ dill head on bottom of each pint jar.

Fill jars with cucumber slices. Leave ½ inch of headspace. Add 1 slice of onion and ½ dill head on top. Pour hot pickling mixture over cucumbers. Leave ¼ inch of headspace. Adjust lids, and process as directed in Table 1.

**Pickled green tomato relish**

10 pounds small, hard green tomatoes  
1½ pounds red bell peppers  
1½ pounds green bell peppers  
2 pounds onions  
½ cup canning or pickling salt  
1 quart water  
4 cups sugar  
1 quart vinegar (5 percent)  
½ cup prepared yellow mustard  
2 tablespoons cornstarch  

**Yield:** 7 to 9 pints  

Procedure: Wash and coarsely grate or finely chop tomatoes, peppers and onions. Dissolve salt in water, and
Pour water over vegetables in large kettle. Heat to boiling and simmer 5 minutes. Drain vegetables in a colander. Return vegetables to kettle and add sugar, vinegar, mustard and cornstarch. Stir to mix. Heat to a boil and simmer 5 minutes. Fill sterilized pint jars with hot relish. Leave ⅛ inch of headspace.

Adjust lids, and process as directed in Table 1.

**Pickled horseradish sauce**

- 2 cups (¾ pound) freshly grated horseradish
- 1 cup white vinegar (5 percent)
- ½ teaspoon canning or pickling salt
- ¼ teaspoon powdered ascorbic acid

**Yield:** About 2 half-pints

**Note:** Make only small quantities of horseradish at a time — its biting taste fades within 1 to 2 months, even when refrigerated. Combine ingredients, and fill sterilized jars. Seal jars tightly. Store in a refrigerator.

**Pickled bread-and-butter zucchini**

- 16 cups fresh zucchini, sliced
- 4 cups onions, thinly sliced
- ½ cup canning or pickling salt
- 4 cups white vinegar (5 percent)
- 2 cups sugar
- 4 tablespoons mustard seed
- 2 tablespoons celery seed
- 2 teaspoons ground turmeric

**Yield:** About 8 to 9 pints

**Procedure:** Cover zucchini and onion slices with 1 inch water and salt. Let stand 2 hours and drain thoroughly. Combine vinegar, sugar and spices. Bring to a boil and add zucchini and onions. Simmer 5 minutes. Fill jars with zucchini mixture and pickling mixture. Leave ½ inch of headspace.

Adjust lids, and process as directed in Table 1. Or use the low-temperature pasteurization treatment described in MU Extension publication GH1457, *Food Preservation — In a Pickle.*

**Piccalilli**

- 6 cups chopped green tomatoes
- 1½ cups chopped sweet red peppers
- 1½ cups chopped green peppers
- 2 cups chopped onions
- 7½ cups chopped cabbage
- ½ cup canning or pickling salt
- 3 tablespoons whole mixed pickling spice
- 4½ cups vinegar (5 percent)
- 3 cups brown sugar

**Yield:** 9 half-pints

**Procedure:** Wash, chop, and combine vegetables with the ½ cup salt. Cover with hot water and let stand 12 hours. Drain and place in a clean white cloth. Squeeze gently to remove all liquid.

Mix vinegar and brown sugar in a saucepan. Tie spices loosely in a spice bag; add to vinegar and brown sugar mixture. Heat to boil. Add vegetables and continue boiling gently 30 minutes, or until the volume of the mixture is reduced by one-half. Remove spice bag.

Fill hot, sterilized jars with hot mixture. Leave ½ inch of headspace. Adjust lids, and process as directed in Table 1.

**Pickled carrots**

- 2⅔ pounds peeled carrots (about 3½ pounds as purchased)
- 5½ cups white vinegar (5 percent)
- 1 cup water
- 2 cups sugar
- 2 teaspoons canning salt
- 8 teaspoons mustard seed
- 4 teaspoons celery seed

**Yield:** About 4 pints

**Procedure:** Wash and peel carrots. Cut into rounds that are about ½ inch thick. Combine vinegar, water, sugar and canning salt in an 8-quart Dutch oven or stockpot. Bring to a boil, and boil 3 minutes. Add carrots and bring back to a boil. Then reduce heat to a simmer and heat until half-cooked, about 10 minutes. Meanwhile, place 2 teaspoons mustard seed and 1 teaspoon celery seed into each empty hot pint jar. Fill jars with hot carrots, leaving 1 inch of headspace. Fill with hot pickling liquid, leaving ⅛ inch of headspace. Remove air bubbles, and adjust headspace, if needed. Wipe rims of jars with a damp, clean paper towel. Adjust lids and process.

**Pickled baby carrots**

**Procedure:** Follow directions for pickled carrots, using 8½ cups peeled baby carrots, leaving them whole, and use the same process time.

**Also from MU Extension publications**

- GH1451, *Quality for Keeps: Before You Start to Can, Learn the Basics*
- GH1452, *Quality for Keeps: Steps to Success in Home Canning*
- GH1454, *Quality for Keeps: Preserve Your Garden Delights — How to Can Fresh Vegetables*
- GH1457, *Quality for Keeps: Pickling Basics — In a Pickle*