

Easy Homemade Refrigerator Pickles

Overview:

Make homemade pickles any time of year using homegrown or purchased vegetables. Refrigerator pickles are a tasty, nutritious treat and fun gift for family and friends! Best of all, they don't require canning and will stay fresh in the refrigerator for up to two weeks.

Materials:

- 3 cups apple cider vinegar (or distilled white vinegar)
- 3 cups water
- 2 Tablespoons kosher salt (you can use regular iodized salt but it may discolor the pickles slightly)
- 2 Tablespoons sugar
- 2 Tablespoons (or more) pickling spices*
- 3 to 4 clean, pint-sized canning jars with tight-fitting lids
- Non-reactive saucepan (stainless steel or glass; avoid aluminum)
- Vegetables: cooked beets (shown below) or any of the following vegetables, which can be pickled *without* cooking: carrots, cauliflower, green beans, radishes, cucumbers, onions, peppers, etc.



*You can purchase a pickling spice blend or create your own using a combination of the following to make up a total of 2 Tablespoons: allspice, dill seed, mustard seed, crushed chili pepper, peppercorn, bay leaf, clove, coriander seed.

Note: The pickling brine recipe makes enough for approximately 4 pint jars, depending on the amount of vegetables in each jar.

Approximate Time to Complete: 1 hour to roast beets, if using. 1/2 hour to make pickles

Location: Indoor

Ages: All ages

Season: Any season

Instructions:

Most vegetables, including carrots, cauliflower, green beans, radishes, cucumbers, and onions, can be pickled raw using the following instructions. (Beets are best cooked first.) Wash the vegetables, and then cut them into slices, chunks, or spears so they fit into the jars. The following photos illustrate how to make pickled beets.

These beets were roasted in the oven for about an hour. Once cooled, the slippery skins slide right off — a perfect job for young hands! Beet juice can stain countertops and clothing, so do this job over a sink.



Once the beets are peeled and rinsed, cut them into slices or chunks. The beets are soft enough to cut with a regular table knife, so young picklers may be able to do this themselves. If in doubt, let older kids slice the beets, or do it yourself.



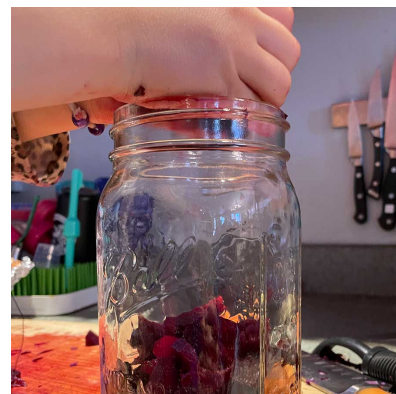
Chopping beets into pieces will help fit more of them in a jar, and makes snacking on them easier.



Beautifully beet-stained hands!



Place the beet slices and chunks into a canning jar. You need a sturdy jar because you'll be pouring hot liquid into it.



Create the pickling brine by placing the water, vinegar, salt, and sugar into a large saucepan and bringing it to a boil. Simmer for a minute or two, stirring until the sugar and salt are dissolved. Add the pickling spices, simmer for a few more minutes, and then turn off heat.



Carefully pour the hot liquid over the beets, making sure the beets are completely submerged in the brine.



Allow the jars to cool to room temperature. Once they're cool, cover and refrigerate for a few days, so the vegetables take up the flavored brine.

Then it's time to enjoy your creations! From left: red onions and cauliflower, beets, and carrots. Keep the jars in the refrigerator and be sure to eat them within two weeks.

