

Quick Pickles

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Ingredients:

3 - 4 cucumbers (cucumber must be firm and spotless) Use thin cucumber that have a smaller seed core. Note: I like to partially peel the cucumbers to produce green stripes for appearance purposes.

2 - 4 branches of fresh dill

Red onion, sliced thin (Optional. Note, yellow onions can be substituted.)

½ cup vinegar (more may be needed)

2 Tbsp to 1/4 cup salt (Kosher salt preferred)

1 Tbsp mixed pickling spice (optional)

1/8 cup sugar (use less then add more to taste)

1 - 3 garlic cloves, crushed (add more or less garlic to suit individual taste)

Procedure:

Wash the cucumbers. Cut in slices about ½ inch (12-14 mm) thick.

Salt. Allow to stand for 30 minutes.

Rinse salt from cucumbers, drain, and gently squeeze out excess liquid. Place in a bowl.

Add thin slices of red onion.

Add vinegar to cover. Add garlic, sugar, dill and pickling spice.

Refrigerate and allow to stand for 1 hour.

Taste. Adjust sugar to desired sweetness.

Explanation

Pickling is a method of preserving foods by either the addition of acid, usually in the form of vinegar, or by brining in a salt-water solution.

In the pickling process, vegetables are preserved by impregnating them with acid which discourages the growth of many microorganisms. The brine is used to remove moisture from the vegetables by osmosis before treating with either vinegar or “fermentation”.

Cooked pickles are either cooked or are placed in a brine to draw out moisture, then they are placed in vinegar along with spices for flavoring. This method is used for sweet and sour pickles, onions, cauliflower, peppers, and others along with mixtures such as relishes and ketchup.

Fermented pickles are placed in a brine that is strong enough to prevent the growth of undesirable bacteria, but weak enough to allow the growth of microbes that produce lactic acid. Sauerkraut and dill pickles (the type prepared in this recipe) are the most common fermented products. This process can take up to three weeks. In this procedure, vinegar is added both as a flavor and to prevent the growth of unwanted bacterial and to increase the acidity of the brine speeding up the pickling process.

References

Levinson, Leonard Louis, *The Complete Book of Pickles and Relishes*, Hawthorn Books, New York, 1965.

McGee, Harold, *On Food and Cooking*, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1984.