

... gives a tart taste and acts as a preservative. Use a high-grade cider or white distilled vinegar no less than 5% acidity. If a less sour product is preferred, add sugar rather than decrease the amount of vinegar.

... : Use white granulated sugar, unless the recipe calls for another sweetener. Brown sugar darkens the product.

... flavor pickles. Use fresh spices and herbs. Whole fresh spices are preferred. ... dry powdered and salt forms may cloud the pickling mixture. Spices lose pungency in heat and humidity. Store spices in airtight containers in a cool place.

... : Soft water should be used in making brine. ... minerals in hard water will have a negative effect on the quality of pickles.

If soft water is not available, soften by boiling for 15 minutes. Let it stand for 24 hours. A scum will likely appear on top of the water. Carefully skim it off. Ladle water from container; do not disturb sediment on bottom. Add 1 tablespoon of vinegar per gallon of boiled water before using.

Some older recipes call for the use of alum and/or lime to add crispness or firmness to pickles. If the proper ingredients are used, these items are unnecessary. Pickle making begins with the brine, and a brine that is made carelessly or maintained

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cloth; heat to boiling. Pack cucumbers into clean, hot jars. Add 1 teaspoon mustard seed and 1 ½ dill head or 1 ½ teaspoon seed per pint. If desired, add 1 clove garlic per pint. Adjust lids.

Process quart jars in boiling water canner 15 minutes for altitudes under 1,000 feet, 20 minutes at 1,001 to 6,000 feet, and 25 minutes above 6,000 feet. If using pint jars, 10 minutes 0 to 1,000 feet, 15 minutes at 1,001 to 6,000 feet, and 20 minutes above 6,000 feet.

Wash zucchini or summer squash. Cut 1/6-inch off blossom end and discard. Cut into 3/16-inch slices. Combine zucchini or squash and onions in a large bowl. Add salt. Cover with 2 inches crushed or cubed ice. Refrigerate 3 to 4 hours, adding more ice as needed.

Combine remaining ingredients in a large pot. Boil 10 minutes. Drain and add zucchini or squash and onions and slowly reheat to boiling. Fill pint or quart jars with slices and cooking syrup, leaving 1/2-inch headspace. Adjust lids and process in a boiling water canner 10 minutes for altitudes under 1,000 feet, 15 minutes for 1,001 to 6,000 feet, and 20 minutes for above 6,000 feet.

After processing and cooling, jars should be

stored 4 to 5 weeks to develop ideal flavor.

Tip: May use 4- to 5-inch pickling cucumbers.

References

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