

Country Kitchen Canning-

pickled favorites from garden and orchard

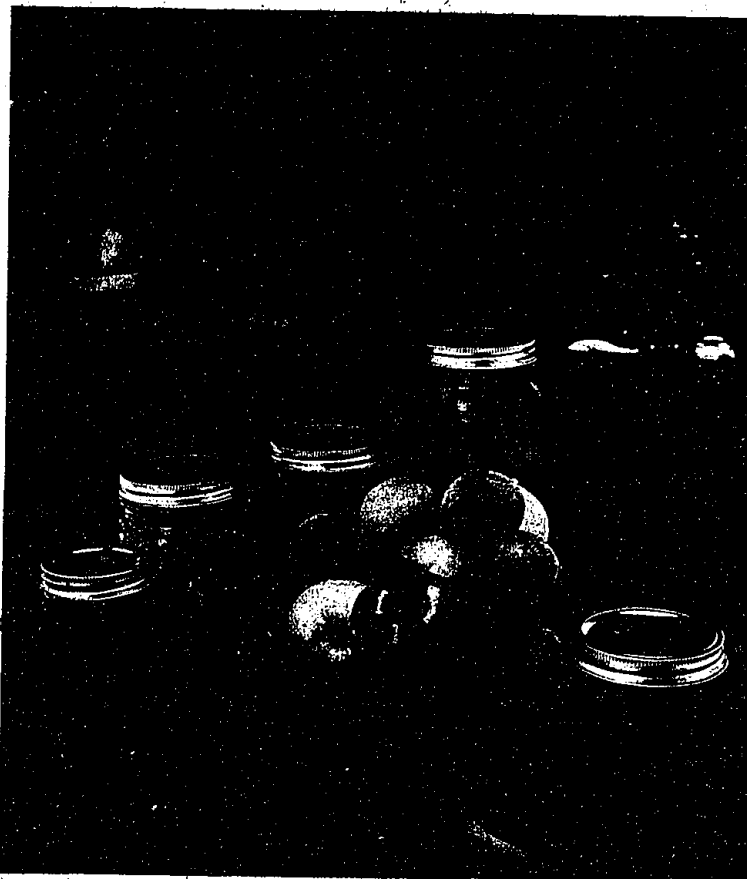
"Country" is a state of mind, a feeling, not a place on a map. Whether you call home a high-rise condo or a colonial saltbox, country is experiencing the best of the past while keeping up the present. Country is warm, friendly people, neighbor helping neighbor. Country is the charm of the little things that make a house a home. Country is cooking hearty meals and the pride and joy of a well-stocked pantry.

In the spirit of country the home economists at Ball Corporation have adapted several down home pickled "recipes" of yesteryear into simple up-to-date recipes such as Home-Style Dill Pickles, Blue Ribbon Pickled Peaches, and County Fair Pepper and Onion Relish.

Pickling was once a way of preserving food for the long winter months ahead. Today, pickling is done, not out of necessity, but for unmatched flavor, economy, and personal satisfaction. Almost anything that grows in a garden or orchard can be pickled. Besides cucumbers, there are peppers, beans, corn, squash, melons, peaches, pears, and apples, to name a few.

The best pickles begin with the freshest vegetables or fruit, just picked from the garden or tree, if possible. If fresh dill is available by all means use it, although dried dill seed is an acceptable alternative. Use two tablespoons of dill seed for each head of fresh dill. Be sure to purchase spices each pickling season, as spices tend to deteriorate and lose their flavor during storage. Select a high grade white distilled or cider vinegar of four to six percent acidity. You'll also need to buy canning salt. It acts as a preservative, adds flavor, and crispness to the pickles. Do not use regular table salt; the additives in it can cause discolored pickles and cloudy liquid.

Today's country kitchen pickles, while preserving the old-fashioned flavor of the past, keep up-to-date with the present. Homemade pickles are now heat processed in a water-bath canner. This insures a good seal, while destroying the microorganisms that cause spoilage. Even though it might be tempting to pack pickled foods in old-style glass top jars with wire bails, standard home canning jars with two-piece lids give the safest, most reliable results. After processing the recommended times, allow the jars to cool; test for a seal by pressing in the center of the lid. If the dome is down, the lid is sealed. Remove bands and store pickles in a dark, cool, dry place. Pickled fruits and vegetables taste their best if the flavors are allowed to mellow for several weeks.



BLUE RIBBON PICKLED PEACHES

10 pounds firm ripe peaches (small to medium sized) 5 cups white vinegar 1 piece ginger root
8-1/2 cups sugar 5 tablespoons whole cloves, crushed 5 sticks cinnamon (2 inches long)

Wash and peel peaches. Put in a solution of 2 tablespoons salt, 2 tablespoons vinegar, and 1 gallon water. Dissolve sugar in vinegar; add a spice bag made of cloves, ginger root, and cinnamon sticks. Bring to a boil. Drain salt-vinegar solution from peaches. Carefully add peaches to boiling syrup and cook until they can be pierced with a fork, but not soft. Remove from heat and allow peaches to stand in syrup overnight.

Prepare home canning jars and lids according to manufacturer's instructions.

Bring syrup and peaches to a boil. Carefully pack peaches into hot jars, leaving 1/4 inch head space. Cover with syrup leaving 1/4 inch head space. Remove air bubbles with a non-metallic spatula. Adjust caps.

Process 20 minutes in a boiling water bath canner. Yield: about 4 quart jars.

COUNTRY APPLE RELISH

2 quarts peeled, cored, and chopped apples 1 cup golden raisins 1/4 teaspoon nutmeg
1/2 cup chopped walnuts 1/4 teaspoon allspice
(about 10 to 12 medium) 1/2 cup red wine vinegar 1 pouch liquid pectin
2-1/3 cups brown sugar (1 pound) 1 teaspoon cinnamon

Prepare home canning jars and lids according to manufacturer's instructions.

Combine chopped apples, sugar, raisins, walnuts, and spices in a large saucepot. Bring to a full, rolling boil over high heat, stirring constantly. Remove from heat; stir in liquid pectin. Carefully ladle into hot jars, leaving 1/4 inch head space. Adjust caps.

Process 10 minutes in a boiling water bath canner. Yield: about seven 8 ounce jars.

OLD-FASHIONED WATERMELON RIND PICKLES

4 quarts cubed watermelon rind 1 quart water 4 sticks cinnamon
8 cups sugar 2 oranges, seeded and sliced 1 tablespoon whole cloves
3 cups white vinegar 2 lemons, seeded and sliced 1 tablespoon whole allspice

Pare watermelon rind, removing green and pink portions. Cut into 1 inch pieces. Cover with 1 quart of water and 1/4 cup salt; allow to stand overnight. Drain and rinse.

Prepare home canning jars and lids according to manufacturer's instructions.

Put the watermelon rind in a large saucepan and cover with cold water. Simmer for about 30 minutes or until tender. Drain and set aside. Combine sugar, vinegar, and water in a large saucepan. Heat, stirring until sugar dissolves. Add the sliced oranges and lemons and spices tied in a cheesecloth bag. Bring mixture to a boil. Add rind and simmer until transparent, and liquid is syrupy. Remove spice bag. Carefully pack rind into hot jars, leaving 1/4 inch head space. Remove air bubbles with a non-metallic spatula. Adjust caps.

Process 10 minutes in a boiling water bath canner. Yield: about four 12 ounce jars.

SPICED SWEET PICKLES

4 pounds pickling cucumbers 3 tablespoons canning salt 2 tablespoons pickling spice
about 3 inches long 2 teaspoons mustard seed 3 cinnamon sticks
3 cups white vinegar 3 cups sugar 2 teaspoons whole allspice
1/2 cup sugar 3 cups white vinegar

Prepare home canning jars and lids according to manufacturer's instructions.

Wash cucumbers; cut crosswise into 1/4 inch slices, discarding ends. Bring to boil 3 cups vinegar, 1/2 cup sugar, 3 tablespoons salt, and 2 teaspoons mustard seed; add cucumber, cover and simmer 5 minutes. Drain. Combine 3 cups sugar, 3 cups vinegar, and 2 tablespoons pickling spice. Tie cinnamon and allspice in cheesecloth bag; add to sugar and vinegar mixture. Bring to a boil. Pack cucumber slices into hot jars, leaving 1/4 inch head space. Remove spice bag from syrup. Carefully ladle hot syrup over cucumbers, leaving 1/4 inch head space. Remove air bubbles with a non-metallic spatula. Adjust caps.

Process 10 minutes in a boiling water bath canner. Yield: about 5 pint jars.

HOME STYLE DILL PICKLES

30 to 40 medium cucumbers 1 quart white vinegar Fresh dill
(about 4 inches long) 5 cups water Garlic cloves
1 cup canning salt 1/4 cup mixed pickling spices Hot red peppers (optional)
2 quart water

Wash cucumbers carefully. Dissolve 1 cup canning salt in 2 quarts water. Soak cucumbers in brine for 24 hours. Remove and dry.

Prepare home canning jars and lids according to manufacturer's instructions.

Combine 1 quart white distilled vinegar, 5 cups water, 1/4 cup mixed pickling spices, and fresh dill. Bring to a boil. Pack whole cucumbers into hot jars, leaving 1/4 inch head space. Add 2 cloves garlic, a small hot red pepper, if desired, and a small head of dill in each jar. Carefully pour hot liquid over cucumbers, leaving 1/4 inch head space. Remove air bubbles with a non-metallic spatula. Adjust caps.

Process 15 minutes in a boiling water bath canner. Yield: about 4 quart jars.

COUNTY FAIR PEPPER-ONION RELISH

12 sweet bell peppers, red or green 6 large onions 2 tablespoons salt
1-1/2 cups sugar 2 cups cider vinegar

Prepare home canning jars and lids according to manufacturer's instructions.

Wash and seed peppers. Chop peppers and onions; place in a saucepot. Add sugar, salt, and vinegar. Boil 30 minutes. Carefully ladle into hot jars, leaving 1/4 inch head space.

Process 15 minutes in a boiling water bath canner. Yield: about ten 8 ounce jars.

