

Easy bread and butter pickles simply delicious



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Making pickles was just one of the food preservation topics Sylvia Treiman, home economist for the MSU Cooperative Extension, covered in the class at the Oakland County office in Pontiac.

I tried to make refrigerator pickles last summer, but they didn't turn out. Now I know why.

"Salad cucumbers are for salads. They have a different texture than cucumbers grown for pickling," said Treiman. "Small pickling cukes are best for pickles because they have fewer seeds."

Before you start to make pickles, wash and scrub the cucumbers. Cut off about 1/4 inch at each end. Use canning or pickling salt. Iodized or non-iodized salt can be used safely, but the brine will be cloudy.

Purchase fresh vinegar with 5 percent acidity. Use either commercial white or cider vinegar. White vinegar is tart — use it when a light color is important. Cider vinegar has a more mellow flavor, and can cause darkening of the product.

Use fresh or dried spices. Buy spices in small quantities and store them in a cool, dry dark place.

This easy recipe is simply delicious.

BREAD AND BUTTER PICKLES

10 small cucumbers, about 14-inch long
2 medium onions, sliced
1/4 cup canning salt
1/4 cup vinegar
1 cup sugar
1 tablespoon mustard seed
1 teaspoon turmeric
1 teaspoon celery seed
1/2 teaspoon ginger
1/2 teaspoon peppercorns

Combine cucumbers and onions in a large bowl. Layer with salt. Cover with ice and let stand 1 1/2 to 2 hours. Drain and rinse.

Prepare home canning jars and lids according to manufacturer's instructions. Combine vinegar, sugar, and seasonings in a large microwave-safe bowl. Cook, uncovered, in microwave oven 6 to 7 minutes or until mixture boils. Stir once.

Add cucumbers and onions. Return, covered, to microwave and continue cooking on highest setting until mixture returns to a boil, about 12 to 14 minutes, stirring twice.

Carefully ladle into hot jars, leaving 1/4-inch head space. Remove air bubbles with a non-metallic spatula. Adjust cap. Process 10 minutes in a boiling water bath canner. Do not attempt to process in a microwave oven. Yield about 4 pint jars.

Keely Wygonik is editor of the Taste and Entertainment sections of the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers. She welcomes your calls and comments. (313) 953-2106, fax (313) 591-7279, or write: Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, Inc. 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia, MI 48150.

Win tickets to new movie

Write and tell us how food helped you win over the love of your life to win two tickets to see "Eat Drink Man Woman," now playing at the AMC Maple III Theatre in Birmingham.

Send entries by Monday, Aug. 29 to Keely Wygonik, Taste/Entertainment Editor, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia, MI 48150. Or fax entries to (313) 591-7279.

The first 24 to respond will receive movie passes. There will also be a grand prize winner who will receive movie passes and a paperback book. The book features some of the recipes from the movie.

Observer & Eccentric employees and their families are not eligible.

"Eat Drink Man Woman," is a delicious new comedy about food, fatherhood and family ties. For Taiwan's greatest living chef, food is life. Despite possessing a culinary prowess revered by friends and neighbors, he is at a loss at how to prepare his single greatest dish — raising three rebellious daughters.

"Eat Drink Man Woman."

Torta perfect for picnics

AP — Sunset concerts, theater in the park, a trip to the beach, a Labor Day outing — all lend themselves to outdoor dining. Deciding what to pack in the picnic basket, however, can be a real challenge.

Instead of soggy sandwiches, take a cue from Italian cooks and prepare a torta — a portable pie filled with all kinds of good things to eat! In the following recipe, the torta is filled with cooked crab, spinach, mushrooms, meatballs, and cheese. To save time, use frozen bread dough for the torta. Serve with a green salad and fresh fruit for dessert.

PICNIC TORTA

- 2 loaves frozen bread dough (thawed)
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh thyme or 1 teaspoon dried
- 1 medium red onion, chopped
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 3 cups sliced mushrooms
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh basil
- 4 meatballs, sliced
- 1/2 bunch fresh spinach leaves, washed and sliced
- 1/2 cup shredded Monterey Jack cheese
- 1/2 cup shredded mozzarella cheese
- 8 ounces frozen cooked crab meat

Combine bread dough; let rise until doubled. Sprinkle with thyme and roll on floured surface into a 20-inch circle. Transfer to a greased 10-inch springform pan, letting edges drape over the sides.

Sauté onion, garlic, mushrooms and seasonings in 2 tablespoons of the olive oil until tender, about 6 minutes. Stir in drained crab, reserved. Sauté meatballs in remaining oil until tender.

Layer mushroom mixture, half meatballs, half spinach leaves, half cheese and half crab meat. Repeat.

Bring dough together over top, leaving a small vent for steam. Brush lightly with oil or a beaten egg. Bake in a 375-degree oven for 30 minutes or until golden brown and crusty. Cut into 10 wedges while warm or let cool to room temperature. Makes 10 servings.

Nutrition facts per serving: 479 cal., 21.5 g pro., 66.7 g carbs., 1.5 g dietary fiber, 13.0 g fat, 1,000 mg sodium, 34 mg chol.

Make a whole meal on the grill

AP — From side dishes to salads to desserts, today's grillers are preparing entire meals on the grill. For a backyard barbecue, serve slow-roasted pork loin topped with a mustard-dill sauce. To complete the meal: grill-roasted garlic, skewered potato salad and soft dinner rolls. Add steamed green beans and cherry tomatoes, if you like.

QUICK-CURED PORK LOIN

3-pound boneless pork loin roast, rolled and tied
1/4 cup vegetable oil
3 cloves garlic, minced
2 tablespoons coarse salt
Mustard-Dill Sauce (recipe below)

Place roast in a large, 2-gallon self-sealing bag. Add oil, garlic and salt; rub over pork, coating roast well. Seal bag; marinate at room temperature 1 hour or overnight in the refrigerator.

Prepare medium-hot, banked coals in a kettle-style grill. Remove pork from marinade; place on grill over drip pan. Lower grill hood; grill for 1 to 1 1/2 hours until internal temperature is 155 degrees. (Internal temperature will rise about 5 degrees.) Remove to serving platter, let stand 10 minutes, slice to serve. Serve with Mustard-Dill Sauce. Makes 8 servings.

Mustard-Dill Sauce: In a small bowl, combine 1 cup fat-free mayonnaise, 4 tablespoons Dijon-style mustard, 1/4 cup snipped parsley, 3 tablespoons fresh dillweed or 1 tablespoon dried dill; mix thoroughly until smooth. Cover and refrigerate up to 24 hours. Makes about 1 1/2 cups.

Nutrition facts per 3-ounce serving of pork: 182 cal., 26 g pro., 7 g fat, 68 mg chol., 390 mg sodium.

Nutrition facts per 1-tablespoon serving of mustard-dill

sauce: 9 cal., 4 g carbs.

GRILL-ROASTED GARLIC

2 large whole unpeeled heads of garlic
Olive oil

Rub garlic heads with oil; wrap each in foil. Cook over hot coals, turning three or four times, until cloves are very soft when lightly pressed and outer skins are browned, about 45 minutes.

Unwrap and arrange on serving plate with a thin sharp knife for removing cloves from head of garlic. Squeeze each clove gently to release sweet creamy garlic paste. Makes 8 servings.

Nutrition facts per serving: 33 cal., 3 g carbs., 2 g fat.

SKEWERED FRENCH POTATO SALAD

32 small new potatoes, washed and dried
4 tablespoons vegetable oil
1/2 cup olive oil

6 tablespoons red-wine vinegar
1 teaspoon Dijon-style mustard
1 teaspoon dried thyme
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon pepper
2 tablespoons chopped parsley
2 tablespoons minced chives

Rub potatoes well with vegetable oil. Skewer four potatoes onto 8 metal skewers, leaving some space between potatoes. Grill over moderately hot coals, turning once, for about 20 to 25 minutes, until potatoes are tender.

Meanwhile, whisk together remaining ingredients. Arrange skewers on serving platter, twist each potato open slightly with a fork and drizzle with the dressing, turning each skewer to coat potatoes well. Makes 8 servings.

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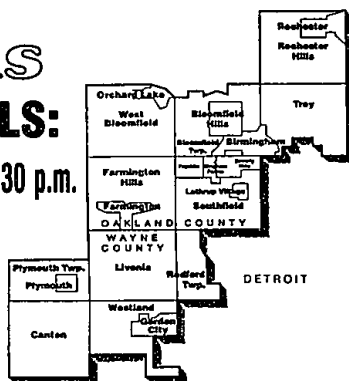
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