

ROOTING DC 2016: Get Pickling!



Quick Pickling Basics

Vinegar: Use a pale-colored vinegar, such as rice vinegar, white wine vinegar, apple cider vinegar. Do not use the industrial white vinegar if you can avoid it – the taste is quite harsh.

Sugar: Sugar provides a nice balance to the salty vinegar brine, but you can leave it out if you are avoiding sugar. Honey or another sugar substitute might work, but start with less and add more after tasting the dissolved mixture, as honey and other less traditional sweeteners can add different flavors.

Storage: Over time, the onions will eventually turn a uniform shade of pink. Be sure to store your pickled onions in a glass or ceramic container. Metals will react with the vinegar; plastic will absorb the flavors.

RECIPE: Quick Pickled Onions – adapted from thekitchn blog

At their most basic, pickled onions are simply sliced onions that have been covered in a mixture of vinegar, salt, and sugar, and allowed to marinate. It's a lot of fun to add additional spices and to customize the mixture to match your dish. In the recipe below, I used fresh garlic and a chili for a bit of a kick, along with some other aromatics. You can leave them out or add others to suit your taste. Some ideas: herbs (rosemary, oregano, bay leaf); orange peel; cloves; spices (star anise, cinnamon, Szechuan pepper); fresh ginger. This recipe works well for radishes, too, which are GREAT on tacos.... Recipes makes @ ½ cup.

Ingredients

- ½ medium red onion ***Today's onions are from Twin Springs Fruit Farm**
- ¼ tsp sugar
- ¼ tsp salt
- ¼ cup vinegar

Flavorings (optional):

- 1 small clove of garlic, peeled & halved ***Today's comes from New Morning Farm**
- 2 black peppercorns
- 2 allspice berries
- small spring of thyme
- 1 small dried chili

Directions

Start 2 or 3 cups of water on to boil.

Peel and thinly slice the onion into approximately ¼-inch moons.

In the container you will be using to store the onions, add the sugar, salt, vinegar, and any flavorings. Stir to dissolve.

Place the onions in the sieve and place the sieve in the sink. Slowly pour the boiling water over the onions and let them drain. (This is a shortcut version of “blanching” the onions.)

Add the onions to the jar and stir gently to evenly distribute the flavorings.

Your quick pickled onions will be ready in about 30 minutes, but are better after a few hours.

Store in the refrigerator. They will keep for several weeks, but are best in the first week.

This session was led by food educator and Slow Food DC board member, Ibtí Vincent.

Learn more about Slow Food DC and sign up for the free monthly newsletter at www.slowfooddc.org.



Some other quick pickle recipes

RECIPE: Easy Pickled Ginger -- Great for sushi!

Ingredients

- ½ lb fresh ginger (young and tender, if you can find it)
- ½ tsp salt
- ¾ cup rice vinegar
- ½ cup brown sugar

Directions

Peel and thinly slice ginger and toss with salt. (I usually use a spoon to scrape off the peel, and then use a potato peeler to shave thin slices of ginger.)

Meanwhile, combine rice vinegar with brown sugar and bring to a boil on the stovetop. Simmer until sugar dissolves.

Stuff ginger into a clean, heat-tolerant glass jar -- I used a wide-mouth pint jar -- and pour the sugar-vinegar mixture over it.

Cool on the countertop, then cover and store in the fridge. It should be good for a few months... if you don't scarf it all in the first week.

RECIPE: Quick Pickled Grapes -- Amazing in cocktails!

Ingredients

- 1/3 cup white wine vinegar
- 5 tsp apple cider vinegar
- 2 tsp mustard seed
- 4-5 whole black peppercorns
- ½ star anise, crushed
- large pinch salt
- grapes (about ¼ lb), preferably seedless, stems removed
- ½ cinnamon stick

Directions

Combine the vinegars, mustard seed, peppercorns, star anise, and salt in a small saucepan and bring to a boil.

Meanwhile, put the cinnamon stick in an 8oz jar, then fill the rest of the jar with grapes.

Pour the pickling solution into the jar to fill. Add additional apple cider vinegar as needed to be sure all grapes are submerged.

Seal and refrigerate. Use within a couple of months – the longer you leave them, the more intense the flavor.

Recipes courtesy of food educator and current Slow Food DC board member, Ibtí Vincent. Learn more about SFDC at www.slowfooddc.org. Check out Ibtí's recipes at <http://abikeablefeast.blogspot.com>.