



Pick a Peck of Pickles



The bounty of fresh cucumbers is upon us. Pickling cucumbers are ripening in our gardens and are available in local farmers markets, along with fresh dill, onions, spicy peppers and other flavorings to make delicious pickles. This is a great time to preserve these vegetables and other fruits for longer storage.

“Pickling” is the term used for preserving foods with acid and salt. Sometimes pickles are produced by letting them ferment in a saltwater (brine) solution for a longer period of time creating its own acid. The quick pickle method uses a solution of added acid (vinegar), water and salt added to cucumbers, and other vegetables or fruits for eating soon after they are prepared. Quick pickles may also be made shelf stable by canning and then stored for use throughout the year.

It is important to use tested recipes with correct proportions of vegetables or fruits, sugar, salt, vinegar and spices to make a safe product with good tasting results. Do not adapt old recipes by adding additional vinegar or other modifications because recipes that have not been tested may not be safe. Current and tested recipes are available in recognized resources such as *USDA Complete Guide to Home Canning (USDA 2015)* or the *National Center for Home Food Preservation’s* website. For best results select a pickling variety of cucumber, save the table and slicing cucumbers for fresh salads and cucumber side dishes. The University of Georgia’s Cooperative Extension recommends using pure granulated salt such as pickling or canning salt without anti-caking agents and white or cider vinegar of 5-percent acidity to ensure an appealing and safe product.

Want to learn more? UCCE Master Food Preservers will offer **Pick a Peck of Pickles** class on July 27 from 10am-12pm in San Luis Obispo. This class is all about pickling! Learn how to create different flavor profiles for sweet, sour, or spicy pickles. Learn how to make quick and easy refrigerator pickles as well as how to can and store them in the pantry for later use. Pre-registration required. Class size is limited. Fee: \$10.00. Registration: <http://ucanr.edu/peckofpickles>.

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