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How to Make Homemade Canned Pickled Cabbage

You think making and canning your own pickled cabbage is difficult or expensive? Not at all! You can do it with basic equipment already in your kitchen - you just need a canning pot. And thanks to the vinegar in pickled cabbage, you can use either a plain open water bath pot or a pressure canner (which will also let you can low acid vegetables!) You can use red or white cabbage (I prefer red, as shown, but many people prefer white!)

So, here's how to can pickled cabbage! The directions are complete with instructions in easy steps and completely illustrated. In the winter when you open a jar, the pickled cabbage will taste **MUCH** better than any store-bought canned pickled cabbage!

Prepared this way, the jars have a shelf life of about 12 months, and aside from storing in a cool, dark place, require no special attention.

Directions for Making Canned Pickled Cabbage

Ingredients and Equipment

- 12 lbs of Cabbage, red or white (see step 1)
- 2 quarts (8 cups) of red wine vinegar (5% acidity)
- 1/2 cup canning or pickling salt - [See this page for pickling supplies, equipment, books, crocks and additives.](#)
- 1 cup brown sugar or Splenda
- 2 cinnamon sticks
- 1/2 cup mustard seed
- 1/4 cup whole cloves - about 1 small package from the grocery store
- 1/4 cup mace
- 1/4 cup allspice (whole)
- 1/4 cup whole peppercorns
- 1/4 cup celery seed
- Jar grabber (to pick up the hot jars)
- Jar funnel (\$2 at Wal-Mart)
- At least 1 large pot (not exposed metal - either nonstick coated, ceramic, enamel or glass)
- Large spoons and ladles
- Ball jars (Publix, Wal-Mart carry them - about \$7 per dozen pint jars including the lids and rings)
- 1 [Water Bath Canner](#) OR a pressure Canner (a large pressure pot with a lifting rack to sterilize the jars after filling about \$75 to \$200 at mall kitchen stores, Wal-Mart, cheaper online; [see this page for more about pressure canners](#)).

Recipe and Directions

Step 1 - Selecting the cabbage

The most important step! You need cabbage that are FRESH and crisp. Limp, old cabbage will make nasty tasting canned cabbage. Guests will probably throw them at you.. Select firm, crisp cabbage. Remove and discard any soft, diseased, spotted and chewed up cabbage.

How many cabbage and where to get them

You can grow your own, pick your own, or buy them at the grocery store. About 12 pounds of cabbage is typically about 3 or 4 heads and it makes about 5 quarts or 10 pints of pickled cabbage. I wouldn't use canned cabbage; what's the point: Most of the flavor is gone from them, and you can always get fresh cabbage.

Step 2 - Prepare the jars and canner

Wash the jars and lids



This is a good time to get the jars ready! The dishwasher is fine for the jars; especially if it has a "sterilize" cycle. Otherwise put the jars in boiling water for 10 minutes. I just put the lids in a small pot of almost boiling water for 5 minutes, and use the magnetic "lid lifter wand" (available from WalMart, Target, and sometimes at grocery stores) to pull them out.

Get the canner heating up



Rinse out your canner, put the rack in the bottom, and fill it with hot tap water. (Of course, follow the instruction that came with the canner, if they are different). Put it on the stove over low heat just to get it heating up for later on.

Step 3 - Wash the cabbage!

Remove the tough outer leaves. I'm sure you can figure out how to scrub the cabbage in plain cold or lukewarm water using your hands.

Step 4 - Quarter and shred

Just take a sharp knife and cut the cabbage. in to 4 quarters, through the stem. That makes it easy to slice of the tough stem part.

Next take each quarter and either shred it in a food processor, or use a grater (or a knife) as you prefer.

Step 5 - Layer the cabbage with salt and let stand 24 hours

yep, that's right, you're going to layer the cabbage with the 1/2 cup salt (total) until both are gone, in a large bowl (preferably a glass or plastic bowl, but metal's ok, since the mixture is not acidic yet). Cover the bowl and let it stand at room temperature (unless it is a hot summer day, then use the fridge) for 24 hours.

Step 6 - Rinse and drain

Rinse the cabbage under cool water in a strainer.

Drain the shredded cabbage thoroughly on cloth or paper towel lined trays for 6 hours.

Step 7 - Combine the spices in a large pot

Mix the

- 2 quarts (8 cups vinegar) (5% acidity)
- 1 cup brown sugar (or Splenda if you need a no-sugar version)
- 1/4 cup mace
- 1/2 cup mustard seed

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together in a large pot, preferably a pot that does not have exposed metal (nonstick lined are ok). Don't turn the heat on yet.

Step 8 - tie the spices together in a spice bag

Using cheesecloth or a spice bag, put the

- 2 cinnamon sticks
- 1/4 cup whole cloves - about 1 small package from the grocery store
- 1/4 cup allspice (whole)
- 1/4 cup whole peppercorns
- 1/4 cup celery seed

in the bag and using a twist tie, close the bag. If you don't have cheesecloth or a spice bag, a piece of thin clean cotton, like an old tie shirt, works fine.

Here's a great trick for the spices: get a baby food holder like this one, available at Target and any baby supplies store.



It is made of plastic, and can hold the spices for easy removal later. It's reusable and has no metal, so it won't react with the vinegar!

Step 9 - Cook for 5 minutes

Turn the heat on and cook it for 5 minutes from the point it starts to boil

Step 10 - Packing the cabbage in the canning jars



Remove the spice bag, then fill the jars. This is called "hot packing"! Fill the jars with cabbage, leaving $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch headspace. Pack the jars fairly tightly, but be sure to leave $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch of space at the TOP of the jar. That is called "headspace" and is needed for expansion during heating in the water bath.

Step 11 - Pour boiling cooking liquid into each packed jar

Use a ladle or pyrex measuring cup to carefully fill each packed jar with the hot vinegar solution, again allowing $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch headspace. The cabbage should be covered and there should still be 1/2 inch of airspace left in the top of each jar. Be careful not to burn yourself, (or anyone else - children should be kept back during this step!)

Step 12 - Put the lids and rings on

Put the lids on each jar and seal them by putting a ring on and screwing it down snugly (but not with all your might, just "snug").

Step 13 - Put the jars in the canner and the lid on the canner

Using the jar tongs, put the jars on the rack in the canner. Make sure the tops of the jars are covered by at least 1 inch of water.



Step 14 - Process for 20 minutes*

The chart below will help you determine the right processing time and pressure, if you have a different type of canner, or are above sea level. **For most people, using a plain open water bath canner, the time will be 20 minutes.** You can use either a plain water bath canner OR a pressure canner, since the vinegar adds so much acidity (if you can vegetables other than tomatoes without adding vinegar, you must use a pressure canner).

*Recommended Processing times For Pickled Cabbage in A Boiling Water (Open) Bath Canner						
			PROCESS TIMES (MIN) AT ALTITUDES OF:			
Canned Product	Style of Pack	Jar Size	0-1000 ft.	1001-3000 ft.	3001-6000 ft.	Above 6000 ft.
Pickled Cabbage	Hot	Pints or Quarts	20	25	30	35

Recommended process time for cabbage in a dial-gauge pressure canner.

		Canner Pressure (PSI) at Various Altitudes for Dial-Type Pressure Canners			
Jar Size	Process Time	0 - 2,000 ft	2,001 - 4,000 ft	4,001 - 6,000 ft	6,001 - 8,000 ft
Pints	20 min	11 lb	12 lb	13 lb	14 lb
Quarts	25	11	12	13	14

Step 15 - Remove the jars

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Lift the jars out of the water and let them cool on a wooden cutting board or a towel, without touching or bumping them in a draft-free place (usually takes overnight), here they won't be bumped. You can then remove the rings if you like. Once the jars are cool, you can check that they are sealed verifying that the lid has been sucked down. Just press in the center, gently, with your finger. If it pops up and down (often making a popping sound), it is not sealed. If you put the jar in the refrigerator right away, you can still use it. Some people replace the lid and reprocess the jar, then that's a bit iffy. If you heat the contents back up, re-jar them (with a new lid) and the full time in the canner, it's usually ok. You're done!

Other Equipment:

From left to right:

1. Jar lifting tongs to pick up hot jars
2. Lid lifter - to remove lids from the pot of boiling water (sterilizing)
3. Lid - disposable - you may only use them once
4. Ring - holds the lids on the jar until after the jars cool - then you don't need them.
5. Canning jar funnel - to fill the jars and keep the rims clean.

