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See [www.pickyourown.org/allaboutcanning.htm](http://www.pickyourown.org/allaboutcanning.htm) for many other canning directions and recipes

## How to Make Homemade Pickled Mixed Vegetables

**Yield:** About 10 pints

Making and canning your own mixed vegetable pickles, like the kind you buy at the grocery store is an easy way to use and preserve your extra produce for a cold winter night! Here's how to do it, in easy steps and completely illustrated. This method is so easy, ANYONE can do this! It's a great thing to do with your kids! I'm experimenting with the various techniques, such as soaking the mixed vegetables overnight in lime solution first, using "pickle crisp" etc. I'll revise this page as I taste the results in the weeks to come!

**The photos show cucumbers, but you can use a mix of cucumbers, onions, celery, carrots, cauliflower and red peppers**

Click here for the page of frequently asked questions (with answers) about making pickles: <http://www.pickyourown.org/picklesFAQs.htm>

See this page for pickling supplies, equipment, books, crocks and additives. :  
<http://www.pickyourown.org/canningsuppliespickling.htm>

## Ingredients and Equipment

- **Mixed vegetables** - fresh, crisp - not wilted, soft or overripe!
  - 4 lbs of 4- to 5-inch pickling cucumbers,
  - 2 lbs small onions
  - 4 cups cut celery
  - 2 lbs carrots
  - 4 large cups sweet red peppers
  - 2 cups cauliflower flowerets
- **Spices**
  - 1/4 cup prepared mustard
  - 1/2 cup canning or pickling salt
  - 3-1/2 cups sugar
  - 3 tbsp celery seed
  - 2 tbsp mustard seed
  - 1/2 tsp whole cloves
  - 1/2 tsp ground turmeric
- **5 cups of Clear vinegar** (5%, apple cider vinegar works well. Store brand is about \$1.25 for a 64 oz bottle.
- Jar grabber (to pick up the hot jars)
- Jar funnel (\$2 at WalMart, Target, and sometimes at grocery stores)
- 1 large pots; teflon lined, glass or ceramic.
- Large spoons and ladles
- 1 Canner (a huge pot to sterilize the jars after filling (about \$30 to \$35 at mall kitchen stores, sometimes at WalMart (seasonal item). Note: we sell many sizes and types of canners for all types of stoves and needs - see [canning supplies](#)
- Pint canning jars (Ball or Kerr jars can be found at Publix and WalMart - about \$8 per dozen jars including the lids and rings). Be sure to get wide mouth jars to fit the pickles in! Pint size works best!
- Lids - thin, flat, round metal lids with a gum binder that seals them against the top of the jar. They may only be used once.
- Rings - metal bands that secure the lids to the jars. They may be reused many times.

## Directions - How to Make Pickles

### Step 1 - Selecting the mixed vegetables

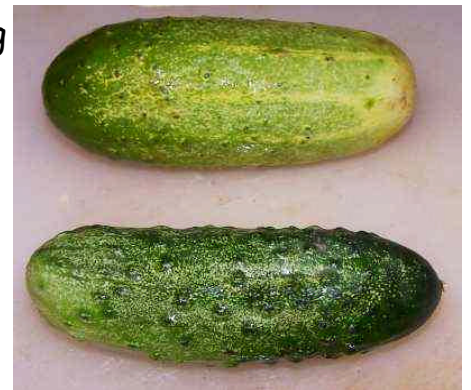


It's fun to go pick your own and you can obviously get better quality mixed vegetables!

At right is a of picture cucumbers from my garden - they are SO easy to grow. But be sure to grow the varieties that are labeled "pickling cucumbers" - they will be much more crisp!

The picture at right shows a good cucumber for pickling (bottom) and a bad one (top). The good one is dark green, firm, and not bloated. It has lots of warts!

The bad one is overripe, it has yellow or white areas in the skin, and the warts are almost all gone. If you cut it open, you will see developed seeds. You don't want seeds!



Overripe mixed vegetables make mushy pickles.

### Step 3 - Wash and cut the vegetables!

I'm sure you can figure out how to wash the fruit in plain cold water. Then prepare and measure out the veggies as described below:

- 4 lbs of 4- to 5-inch pickling cucumbers, washed, and cut into 1-inch slices (cut off 1/16 inch from blossom end and discard)
- 2 lbs peeled and quartered small onions
- 4 cups cut celery (1-inch pieces)
- 2 cups peeled and cut carrots (1/2-inch pieces)
- 2 cups cut sweet red peppers (1/2-inch pieces)
- 2 cups cauliflower flowerets



### Step 4 - Get the jars and lids sterilizing

The dishwasher is fine for the jars; especially if it has a "sterilize" cycle. I get that going while I'm preparing everything else, so it's done by the time I'm ready to fill the jars. If you don't have a dishwasher, submerge the jars in a large pot (the canner itself) of water and bring it to a boil.



Be sure to let it go through the rinse cycle to get rid of any soap!

### Get the canner heating up

Fill the canner about 1/2 full of water and start it heating (with the lid on).

### Start the water for the lids



Put the lids into the small pot of boiling water for at least several minutes. Note: everything gets sterilized in the water bath (step 7) anyway, so this just helps to ensure there is no spoilage later!)



### Step 5 - Chill the veggies

Combine vegetables, cover with 2 inches of cubed or crushed ice, and refrigerate 3 to 4 hours.

### Step 6 - Heat the pickling mix and bring to a near boil

It's easy to make your own mixed vegetable pickling mix from spices, salt, dill, etc:

In large pot (8-quart or bigger), combine

- 5 cups white vinegar (5 percent)
- 1/4 cup prepared mustard

and mix well.





## Add

- 1/2 cup canning or pickling salt
- 3-1/2 cups sugar
- 3 tbsp celery seed
- 2 tbsp mustard seed
- 1/2 tsp whole cloves
- 1/2 tsp ground turmeric

Bring the mix to a near-boil - just simmering!

Be sure to use a NON-metal pot - or a coated metal (teflon, silverstone, enamel, etc.) without breaks in the coating. the metal reacts with the vinegar and makes the pickle solution turn cloudy.

## **Step 7 - Drain the veggies, add to the pot and return to a boil**

Drain vegetables that have been chilling in the fridge, discard the liquid and add the veggies to the hot pickling solution. Cover and slowly return to a boil.

## **Step 8 - Drain the veggies (again)**

As soon as you have brought the pot back to a boil, drain vegetables but this time **SAVE** the pickling solution.

## **Step 9 - Fill the jars with mixed vegetables and put the lid and rings on**



Fill your sterile pint jars, or clean quarts, fresh from the dishwasher with the veggies, leaving 1/2-inch headspace. Then pour in the hot pickling solution, which you saved, leaving 1/2-inch headspace. Seat the lid and hand-tighten the ring around them.

## Step 10 - Boil the jars in the canner

Put them in the canner and keep them covered with at least 1 inch of water. Keep the water boiling. Boil them for 10 minutes (or as directed by the instructions in the pickle mix, or with your canner). [Remember to adjust for altitudes and larger jars!](#) Note: some mixes, such as the Ball Kosher Dill mix call for only boiling for 5 minutes - I'll let you know how that works out! generally, the longer you process the jars, the more mushy (less crisp) the pickles will be.



Adjust lids and process according to the times in the table below (for most folks at or near sea level, 5 to 10 minutes):

**Recommended process time for Pickled Mixed Vegetables in a boiling-water canner.**

		Process Time at Altitudes of		
Style of Pack	Jar Size	0 - 1,000 ft	1,001 - 6,000 ft	Above 6,000 ft
Hot	Pints	5 min	10	15
	Quarts	10	15	20

## Step 11 - Done

Lift the jars out of the water and let them cool without touching or bumping them in a draft-free place (usually takes overnight) 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, the 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.

When can you start eating the pickled vegetables? Well, it takes some time for the seasonings to be absorbed into the pickles. That's at least 24 hours, but for best flavor wait 2 weeks! Ah... the wait...

<b>Summary - Cost of Making Homemade Pickled Mixed Vegetables - makes 12 pint jars, 16 oz each*</b>				
<b>Item</b>	<b>Quantity</b>	<b>Cost in 2004</b>	<b>Source</b>	<b>Subtotal</b>
Mixed vegetables	30-36 (about 3 per pint jar)	free from the garden, or \$3.00 cents at a PYO	Pick your own	\$3.00
Canning jars (pint size, wide mouth), includes lids and rings	12 jars	\$8.00/dozen	WalMart, BigLots, Publix, Kroger	\$8.00
Vinegar	4 cups	\$0.99	WalMart, Publix, Kroger	\$0.99
Pickle spices	1 packet	\$3.00 per package	WalMart, BigLots, Publix, Kroger	\$3.00
<b>Total</b>				<b>\$15.00 total or about \$1.25 per jar INCLUDING the jars - which you can reuse!</b>



\* - This assumes you already have the pots, pans, ladles, and reusable equipment. Note that you can reuse the jars! Many products are sold in jars that will take the lids and rings for canning. For example, For example, Classico Spaghetti sauce is in quart sized jars that work with Ball and Kerr lids and rings. Note that the Classico's manufacturer does not recommend reuse of their jars: [see what they have to say on this page:](#)

## **Answers to Common Questions**

### **What did I do wrong if my pickles aren't crisp or crunchy?**

You probably used overripe cucumbers or didn't measure the vinegar and water accurately. Of course, processing too long in the boiling water bath can do it, too!

### **Why are my pickles cloudy?**

There are a variety of possible causes for cloudy pickles:

In nonfermented pickles (fresh pack), cloudiness might indicate spoilage. Yeast growth may also make pickles cloudy or slimy. Check the pickles for signs of off-odors and mushiness of the pickles. If yeast growth is evident, discard the pickles. If these signs are absent, the pickles are (absent other problems) safe to eat.

Be sure to use a NON-metal pot - or a coated metal (teflon, silverstone, enamel, etc.) without breaks in the coating. the metal reacts with the vinegar and makes the pickle solution turn cloudy. This is the most common cause of cloudy pickles. There is no danger to these pickles, though!

Sometimes the fillers (anticaking agents) in regular table salt may cause slight cloudiness, so always use pickling salt. Obviously, if you used a packet mix (like Mrs. Wages) this should not be a problem.

Hard water might also cause cloudiness. If soft water is not available, boil the hard water and let it sit undisturbed overnight. Pour off the top portion and use it in the pickling solution.

**When making quick process pickles, can I store any leftover pickling solution for future use?**

If the pickling solution is fresh and has not been used to make pickles, cover it and store it in the refrigerator for later use. If the pickling solution has been used, it can be stored in the refrigerator and reused in a day or two for barbecue sauce, cole slaw dressing or a marinade. If mold growth occurs, throw it out.

**Why did the liquid in my dill pickles turn pink?**

Using overmature dill may cause this. If so, the product is still safe. However, yeast growth could also cause this. If yeast growth is evident, discard the pickles.

**I don't have the type of dill my recipe calls for. What can I substitute?**

For each quart, try 3 heads of fresh dill or 1 to 2 tablespoons dill seed (dill weed = 2 tablespoons).

**Can I use burpless cucumbers for pickling?**

Burpless cucumbers are not recommended for use in fermented pickles. This is because at their normal mature size, they produce an enzyme that causes the pickles to soften during fermentation. However, if smaller burpless cucumbers (those with small seed) are used, they may be suitable for making fresh pack pickles.

**I have an old recipe that calls for adding a grape leaf to each jar of pickles. Why?**

Grape leaves contain a substance that inhibits enzymes that make pickles soft. However, if you remove the blossom end of the cucumbers (the source of undesirable enzymes) you don't need to add grape leaves.

### **Why did the garlic cloves in my pickles turn green or bluish green?**

This reaction may be due to iron, tin or aluminum in your cooking pot, water or water pipes reacting with the pigments in the garlic. Or, the garlic may naturally have more bluish pigment, and it is more evident after pickling. Immature bulbs should be cured two to four weeks at 70 ° F. The pickles are safe to eat.

### **Can I use flaked salt for pickling?**

Most recipes call for granulated pickling or canning salt. Flake salt varies in density and is not recommended for pickling.

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### **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.

