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Where you can find a pick-your-own farm near you!

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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 Natural Bread and Butter Pickles

**Yield:** 7 to 9 pint jars

Making and canning your own bread-and-butter pickles the old-fashioned way, with all natural ingredients has never been easier!! 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! Note: You can use these directions to make Squash bread-and-butter pickles. Just substitute slender (1 to 1-1/2 inches in diameter) zucchini or yellow summer squash for the cucumbers, in the same amounts.

[Click here for the page of frequently asked questions \(with answers\) about making pickles.](#)

## Ingredients and Equipment

- 6 lbs of 4- to 5-inch pickling cucumbers
- 8 cups thinly sliced onions (~ 3 lbs)
- 2 tbsp mustard seed
- 1-1/2 tbsp celery seed
- 1 tbsp ground turmeric
- 1 cup pickling lime (optional- for use in variation below for making firmer pickles)
- 1/2 cup canning or pickling salt (most large grocery stores sell this, as does Wal-Mart. Note: the salt is drained and rinsed off, so the final products won't have nearly this much salt in it!)
- 4 cups vinegar (5 percent) (5%, apple cider vinegar works well. Store brand is about \$1.25 for a 64 oz bottle.)
- 4 and 1/2 cups sugar (if you are diabetic, use Splenda, or you can omit sugar altogether)
- water (for rinsing and washing)
- Jar grabber (to pick up the hot jars)
- Jar funnel (\$2 at WalMart, Target, and sometimes at grocery stores)
- Large spoons and ladles
- Lid lifter (has a magnet to pick the lids out of the boiling water where you sterilize them. (\$2 at WalMart, Target, and sometimes at grocery stores)
- 1 large pot; teflon lined, glass or ceramic.
- 1 Water Bath 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! Pints 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 Bread-and-Butter Pickles

Be sure to read all the directions first - there are a couple of options and variations at the end, if you want to make firmer pickles (it's a trade-off; it takes more work!)

### Step 1 - Selecting the cucumbers



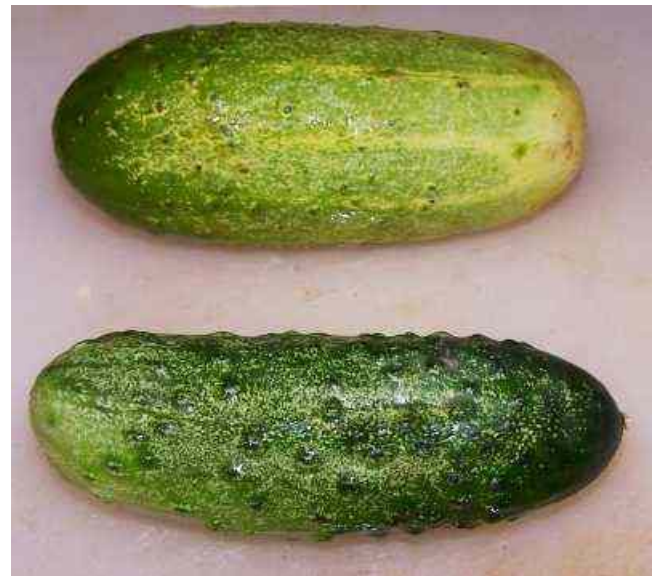
It's fun to go pick your own and you can obviously get better quality cucumbers!

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 cucumbers make mushy pickles.



## Step 2 - How many cucumbers?

It takes about 3 or 4 cucumbers to fill a pint jar. Each cucumber is about 4 - 5 inches long and you will cut off the ends so they will fit with 1/4 inch to spare..

## Step 3 - 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 4 - Wash and cut the vegetables!**

I'm sure you can figure out how to wash the cucumbers and onions in plain cold water.

You will need to cut a 1/16-inch slice off the blossom end of the cucumbers and discard, but you can leave the stem end and  $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch of the stem attached, or slice it off, as you prefer. Then cut the cukes into 3/16-inch slices, cross-wise.

Slice the onions thinly (1/8 inch or less)

#### **Step 5 - Combine cucumbers and onions in a large bowl.**

Add salt to the sliced cucumbers and thinly sliced onions. Cover with 2 inches crushed or cubed ice

#### **Step 6 - Refrigerate**

Refrigerate the cucumber/onion mix for 3 to 4 hours, adding more ice as needed. Then drain and rinse the cukes in cold water, discarding the liquids.

#### **Step 7 - Combine the other ingredients in a separate pot and boil**

Combine these ingredients in a large pot. and boil for 10 minutes. 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.

- 2 tbsp mustard seed
- 1-1/2 tbsp celery seed
- 1 tbsp ground turmeric
- 4 cups white vinegar (5 percent)
- 4 and 1/2 cups sugar (if you are diabetic, use Splenda, or you can omit sugar altogether)



## Note about Pickle Mixes



To interject a crass commercial here - hey, my wife says I've got to pay for the website somehow :) I have found the best (crispest, best tasting) pickles from a mix are with the "Mrs. Wages Polish Dill Refrigerator Pickle Mix" They REALLY are good AND you don't need a canner - you store them in your fridge right after making them. They're ready to eat in 24 hours! Our affiliate sells the mixes (and at really good prices, too)

Whether you want dills or sweet pickles; canning them or straight into the refrigerator; there is a mix for every taste and need here! [Get everything you need to make pickles: mixes, salt, brine, etc. here!](#)

### Step 8 - Drain the cukes/onions and add to the hot liquid

Drain the cucumbers and onions. Add them to the hot mix from step 7 and slowly reheat to boiling.

### Step 9 - Fill the jars

Fill the jars with slices and cooking syrup, leaving 1/2-inch headspace.

### Step 10 - Process the sealed jars

Adjust lids and process according to one of the two methods below. The first method is easiest, but the second method yields firmer pickles:



- a. 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 with your canner). Remember to adjust for altitudes (see below) and larger jars!



**Table 1. Recommended process time for Bread-and-Butter Pickles in a boiling-water canner.**

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

- b. OR use this low-temperature pasteurization treatment:  
The following treatment results in a better product texture but must be carefully managed to avoid possible spoilage.
1. Place jars in a canner filled half way with warm (120° to 140°F) water.
  2. Then, add hot water to a level 1 inch above jars.
  3. Heat the water enough to maintain 180 to 185°F water temperature for 30 minutes.
  4. Check with a candy or jelly thermometer to be certain that the water temperature is at least 180°F during the entire 30 minutes. Temperatures higher than 185°F may cause unnecessary softening of pickles.

## 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 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 pickles? Well, it takes some time for the seasonings to be absorbed into the pickles. After processing and cooling, jars should be stored 4 to 5 weeks to develop ideal flavor. Ah... the wait...

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## Variation for firmer pickles:

(replace steps 4 to 8 above with these steps instead)

1. Wash cucumbers.
2. Cut 1/16-inch off blossom end and discard. Cut into 3/16-inch slices.
3. Mix 1 cup pickling lime and 1/2 cup salt to 1 gallon water in a 2- to 3-gallon crock or enamelware container. Avoid inhaling lime dust while mixing the lime-water solution.
4. Soak cucumber slices in lime water for 12 to 24 hours, stirring occasionally. I keep them in the fridge during this time.



5. Remove from lime solution, rinse, and resoak 1 hour in fresh cold water.
6. Repeat the rinsing and soaking steps two more times. Handle carefully, as slices will be brittle.
7. Drain well.

## Pickle Making Problems?

[See this page for a more complete set of frequently asked pickling questions and answers](#)

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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.

