

Olive's Kitchen

Dill Pickles - Quick, easy and fresh!

Pickling vegetables is quite straightforward. However, to make sure they last and are safe, wash and dry raw ingredients well and use sterilised jars and refrigerate. This recipe is for pickling baby cucumbers, however, use the same method for other vegetables. The ingredient list looks long, but leave out those spices you don't have on hand or don't wish to use, except for the dill seed – it is more important than the dill sprigs. Dill seeds can be difficult to track down, but you may have more luck in finding pickling spices, which you can use instead of those listed.

For three 300 ml jars:

- 500 g baby cucumbers
- 3 garlic cloves, peeled, washed thoroughly, crushed (optional)
- 2 tsp dill seed
- 1 tsp whole mustard seeds
- 1 tsp allspice berries
- 1 tsp coriander seeds
- ¼ tsp chilli flakes, or baby red chillies
- several cloves
- several peppercorns
- 2 or 3 bay leaves, washed, dried
- several sprigs dill (optional)
- 300 ml water
- 300 ml cider vinegar
- 1 tbsp coarse salt



Method:

Trim the ends of the cucumbers, then slice into spears and pack tightly into the jars by lying the jar on its side. (Have other vegetables on hand if the third jar is not quite full.) Add all the ingredients down to and including the bay leaves, sharing them among the jars. Bang the jars to distribute the spices. (Top each jar with a sprig or two of dill.)

Bring the water, vinegar and salt to a boil for several minutes, then pour over the cucumbers to cover them. Lightly bang each jar on the bench to release any air bubbles. Screw on the lids or seal the jars in a suitable way. (Make more brine if you don't have enough. If you have excess, pickle some other vegetables and store them in a suitable container.)

Refrigerate for safe storage. Ready after a few days.

Serve: Makes three 300 ml jars.

Equipment:

Sterilised jars or equivalent. Saucepan.

Difficulty and Time:

Not difficult (2/5). 15 minutes.

Notes and variations:

- Replace the cucumber with spears of carrot or red capsicum or mixed vegetables.
- Keep any leftover pickling liquid as a bbq marinade, or to add to a stew or curry.