

Dill Pickles

Ingredients

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT:

ceramic crock or food-grade plastic bucket

plate that fits inside crock or bucket

1 gallon jug filled with water, or other weight

cloth cover

INGREDIENTS (for 1 gallon)

3-4 pounds unwaxed, small to medium size cucumbers

6 Tablespoons sea salt

3-4 heads fresh flowering dill

OR 3-4 Tablespoon fresh or dried leaf or seeds of dill

2-3 heads of garlic (not bulbs but heads), peeled

1 handful fresh grape, cherry, oak or horseradish leaves (if available)

1 pinch black peppercorns

Method

1. Rinse cucumbers, taking care to not bruise them and making sure their blossom ends are removed. Scrape off any remains at the blossom end. If you're using cucumbers that aren't fresh off the vine that day, soak them for a couple of hours in very cold water to freshen them.

2. Dissolve sea salt in 1/2 gallon (2 quarts) of water to create brine solution. Stir until salt is thoroughly dissolved.

3. Clean the crock, then place at the bottom of it dill, garlic, fresh grape leaves and a pinch of black peppercorns.
4. Place cucumbers in the crock.
5. Pour brine over the cucumbers, place the clean plate over them, then weigh it down with a jug filled with water or a boiled rock. If the brine doesn't cover the weighed-down plate, add more brine mixed at the same ratio of just under 1 Tablespoon of salt to each cup of water.
6. Cover the crock with a cloth to keep out dust and flies and store it in a cool place.
7. Check the crock every day. Skim any mold from the surface, but don't worry if you can't get it all. If there's mold, be sure to rinse the plate and weight. Taste the pickles after a few days.
8. Enjoy the pickles as they continue to ferment. Continue to check the crock every day.
9. Eventually, after one to four weeks (depending on temperature), the pickles will be fully sour. Continue to enjoy them, moving them to the refrigerator to slow down fermentation.

Notes



Most of what is sold in stores as pickles are preserved in vinegar. Brine-fermented pickles are what we are making here. Crunchiness is a good quality in a pickle. Fresh tannin-rich grape leaves placed in the crock are effective at keeping pickles crunchy. If

you don't grow grapes, look around your neighborhood and kindly ask a neighbor if you could cut a handful for pickles. A jar of pickles later shared later will repay the favor. Leaves of sour cherry, oak or horseradish may work as well.

Your cucumbers will inevitably be of various sizes, small to medium making the best pickles. Eat the smallest ones first and give the bigger ones longer to ferment.

Source: Sandor Ellix Katz, Wild Fermentation (Yield: 1 gallon)