

# PickYourOwn.org

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

Click on the printer icon that looks like this:  Print (at the top left, to the right of "save a copy") to print!  
See [www.pickyourown.org/allaboutcanning.htm](http://www.pickyourown.org/allaboutcanning.htm) for many other canning directions and recipes

## How to Make Homemade No-Can Refrigerator Dill Pickles

Making your own pickles, gherkins, kosher dills, bread and butter, sweet pickles, etc. is one of the easiest things you can do with your own cucumbers when you use the no-canning - refrigerator method! Here's how to do it, in easy steps and completely illustrated. This method requires NO special equipment! It is much faster than the old method your grandmother used with tons of pickling salt and de-scumming the brine! Ugh! This method is so easy, ANYONE can do this! It's a great thing to do with your kids! These pickles MUST be stored in the refrigerator at all times, so if you'd rather make [canned pickles that can be stored on a room temperature shelf, see this page!](#)

### Other Types of Pickles

**Refrigerated dills** are cucumbers soaked for 1 week in a salt brine and then stored in the refrigerator for up to 2 months. Other types of pickles include:

- **Fresh-pack (or quick process) pickles** are cured for several hours in a vinegar solution or are immediately combined with hot vinegar, spices, and seasonings. Examples include dills, bread-and-butter pickles and pickled beets. Quick Process is what these instructions show. Other types are:

**Fermented pickles** are vegetables soaked in a brine solution for 4 to 6 weeks. During this time, lactic acid bacteria, naturally present on the surface of vegetables, grows. Other microbes are inhibited by salt. The color of the vegetables changes from bright green to olive/yellow-green, and

the white interior becomes translucent. Examples include dill pickles and sauerkraut.

**Fruit pickles** are whole or sliced fruit simmered in a spicy, sweet-sour syrup. Examples include spiced peaches and crabapples.

**Relishes** are made from chopped fruits or vegetables that are cooked to a desired consistency in a spicy vinegar solution. Examples include corn relish and horseradish.

## Ingredients and Equipment

- Cucumbers - fresh, crisp - not wilted, soft or overripe!
- Refrigerator Pickling mix - It usually goes for about \$2.00 to \$4.00 per packet. A packet will make about a dozen pint jars. I'll also describe how to make your own (in step 5)
- 2 cups 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)
- 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)
- Jar funnel (\$2 at WalMart, Target, and sometimes at grocery stores)
- 1 large pots; teflon lined, glass or ceramic.
- Large spoons and ladles
- Pint jars (Ball or Kerr jars can be found at Publix and WalMart - about \$8 per dozen jars including the lids and rings). Wide mouth jars work better to fit the pickles in! Pint size works best!, But you can use any glass jar with a leak-proof coated metal or non-metal lid.

## Directions - How to Make Pickles

### Step 1 - Selecting the cucumbers



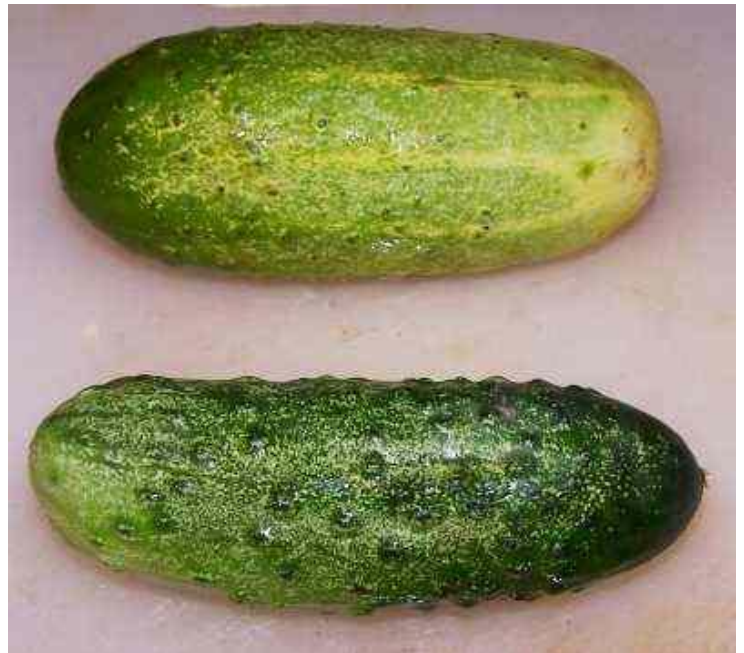
It's fun to go pick your own and you can obviously get better quality cucumbers!

At right is a 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 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.. Typically, 4 to 5 pounds small pickling cucumbers (NOT "burpless" cucumbers), per batch.



## Step 3 - Wash and cut the vegetables!

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

You will need to cut the ends off (about 1/4 inch) and then slice them lengthwise if you like spears. You can also leave them whole or cut them cross-wise for bread-and-butter pickles.

## Step 4 - Get the jars and lids sterilizing

The dishwasher is fine for the jars. 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!

Need lids, rings and replacement jars?

[Get them all here, delivered direct to your home, at the best prices on the internet!](#)



### Step 5 - Mix the vinegar with the pickling mix and bring to a near boil

OK, you can make your own pickling mix from spices, salt, dill, etc.; but it is MUCH more time-consuming, complicated, and prone to problems. This method produces pickles which are just as crisp - as long as you pick very firm cucumbers. It also helps to add 2 grape leaves to every jar (I kid you not, they have something in them that makes the pickles crunchier).

The stores (Wal-Mart, Publix, Kroger, etc.) sell several varieties of refrigerator pickle mixes - Kosher dill, bread-and-butter and sweet pickles are the most commonly seen. And be sure to get them by July - they tend not to re-order them when they sell out.

Mrs. Wages "refrigerator pickle mixes" are the easiest.



If you want to try to make your own, the recipe is:

- 1/2-cup (packed) fresh dill (from your garden or the grocery store's fresh vegetable dept)
- 2 cups thinly sliced onions
- **If you want Bread-and-Butter type pickles also add 1-1/2 cups sugar, honey or Stevia, my preference (or if you prefer, Splenda). Skip this for dill pickles.**
- 1-1/2 cups white vinegar (5%)
- 1/2 teaspoon salt (canning or kosher is best, but not vital)
- 1/2 teaspoon mustard seeds
- 1/2 teaspoon celery seeds
- 1/2 teaspoon ground turmeric

## Pickle Mixes



To interject a crass commercial , 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 6 - Heat the pickle mix**

Bring the mix and 2 cups of vinegar to a near-boil - just simmering! Some brands call for added water, too - just check your packet of mix!

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 - Fill the jars with cucumbers and put the lid and rings on**



Pack the cucumbers, whole or slices in and pour the simmering pickle mix liquid over them. Fill them to within 1/4 inch of the top, seat the lid and hand-tighten the ring around them.

To make your dill pickles crispy, put a fresh clean grape leaf in the bottom of each jar. Continue with the process as usual!

### **Step 8 - Let cool to room temperature and then refrigerate**

Easy! About 2 hours later, pop them into the fridge and wait at least 24 hours!

## Step 9 - Eat!



When can you start eating the pickles? 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 1 week.! Ah... the wait...

Be sure to keep them refrigerated!!!

## 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





**Summary - Cost of Making Homemade Pickles - makes 12 pint jars, 16 oz each\***

Item	Quantity	Cost in 2007	Source	Subtotal
Cucumbers	30-36 (about 3 per pint jar)	free from the garden, or \$4.00 at a PYO	Pick your own	\$4.00
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 mix	1 packet	\$3.00 per package	WalMart, BigLots, Publix, Kroger	\$3.00
<b>Total</b>				<b>\$16.00 total or about \$1.35 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, Classico Spaghetti sauce is in quart sized jars that work with Ball and Kerr lids and rings

## How to make other pickles - recipes and instructions:

- [Cucumber pickles \(quick process, canned\)](#)
- [Cucumber pickle relish](#)
- [Pickled beets](#)
- [Pickled green beans](#)
- [Pickled dilled okra](#)

## Canning processing times

Type of pickling method	Jar size	0 to 1,000 ft above sea level	1,001 to 6,000 ft above sea level
Quick process, (raw cucumbers put in the jar, hot liquid poured over them)-	pint	10 min	15 min
Quick process, (raw cucumbers put in the jar, hot liquid poured over them)-	quart	10 min	15 min

**Can't find the equipment? We ship to all 50 states! Use our [Feedback form!](#)**

## 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.