

Brine and Dandy

Chef Ted Allen gives fresh garden veggies a vinegar kick

PICKLES ARE ONE OF my top 10 favorite foods on the planet. (Also: Dijon mustard, chilies, lemons, coffee ... OK, I'll stop.)

I especially love spicy pickles, and there's an artisanal brand that is quite popular. But they're \$10 or more a jar, which got me to thinking that I could make them myself as refrigerator pickles.

With refrigerator pickles, you don't have to sterilize anything. They don't keep as long as traditional pickles, but they're so tasty, they don't last that long at my house anyway. Refrigerator pickles are a terrific host gift, too. Pretty much anything you put in a jar with liquid instantly becomes gorgeous.

If you're pickling cucumbers, you have to use the Kirby kind—the small unwaxed ones. But you can vary the spices, herbs and their amounts: coriander, celery seed, mustard seed. Dill is traditional, obviously, but you can opt for tarragon, thyme, anything you like. And always, for me, some hot chilies.

I've pickled just about everything: cucumbers, of course, but also carrots, green beans, onions, unripe green tomatoes, turnips, fennel, asparagus, jalapeños, watermelon rind—even pineapple and apples! I haven't tried pickling okra yet. That one's still on my list. ■

Ted Allen, 50, is the host of the Food Network's Chopped and the author of two cookbooks.



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RECIPE

Refrigerator Pickles

SERVES 32



BRINE

- 10 cloves garlic, peeled
- 2 cups white vinegar
- 6 teaspoons kosher salt
- Several sprigs fresh dill
- 1 teaspoon celery seed
- 1 teaspoon coriander seed
- 1 teaspoon mustard seed
- ½ teaspoon black peppercorns

VEGETABLES

- 6 Kirby cucumbers, quartered lengthwise
- 6 medium carrots, peeled and cut in half lengthwise
- A handful of green beans
- A few pieces of cauliflower
- 2 jalapeños

1 In a medium saucepan, boil 4 cups of water; reduce to a simmer and add garlic. Cook 5 minutes. Add vinegar and salt; boil. Stir until salt dissolves. Remove from heat.

2 In two 1-quart Mason jars, add dill, seeds and peppercorns. Using tongs, remove garlic from brine and add to jars. Pack jars with vegetables and chilies.

3 Bring brine to a boil and pour over vegetables, to cover. Cool, cover and refrigerate. The pickles are best after a few days and keep for up to 3 months.

Nutrients per serving:
33 calories, 2g protein, 6g carbohydrates, 5g fiber, 0g fat, 0mg cholesterol, 32mg sodium