

Pickled Onions

To make about 1 ½ pints

2 lb white onions, each about 1 inch in diameter
4 oz. coarse kitchen salt
1 ½ pints malt vinegar
4 oz. sugar
5 teaspoons mixed pickling spice
5 whole cloves
10 whole black peppercorns

To peel the onions easily, first drop them into a pan of boiling water and let them boil briskly for a minute or so. Then drain at once, pour cold water over them, and carefully remove their skins with the aid of a small, sharp knife. Place the onions in a large bowl, sprinkle them with the salt, and turn them about with a spoon to coat them evenly. Cover the bowl and set aside in a cool place for at least 12 hours.

Drain the onions, wash them under cold running water, and pat them dry with kitchen paper. Bring the vinegar, sugar, pickling spice, cloves and peppercorns to the boil in a heavy, medium-sized saucepan over a high heat, stirring until the sugar dissolves. Boil briskly for 5 minutes, then add the onions. The liquid should cover the onions by ½ inch; if necessary add more water. Return to the boil and cook briskly, uncovered, for about 10 minutes, until the onions show only slight resistance when pierced with the tip of a small, sharp knife. Do not overcook. Transfer the onions to hot, dry jars with a slotted spoon, following the directions on page 2 (see below). Pour the vinegar and spice mixture over them, filling the jars to within ¼ inch of the top. Seal at once. Let the onions pickle at room temperature for at least 2 weeks before serving them.

How to Prepare and Cover Jars for Preserves

To ensure consistent results in making jams, jellies, chutneys and pickles at home, use standard preserving jars or jam jars with matching lids. An airtight seal is imperative. Examine each one carefully and discard those with covers that do not fit securely, or those with edges that have cracks or chips. Jars used for jams and jellies may be fitted with screw-on metal lids, or they may be sealed with discs of cellophane held in place with rubber bands.

Wash the jars, lids and rings in hot, soapy water and rinse them with scalding water. Allow them to drain, and dry the jars in a slow oven pre-set at Mar 1/2: 250 deg F. Dry the rings on kitchen paper. The jars must be hot and dry when food is placed in them. Stand them on a pad of newspaper, as contact with a cold, hard surface might cause them to crack.

Fill the jars, using a ladle or a small, hot, dry jug or cup. Wipe them while they are still hot with a clean, warm, damp cloth. Fill each preserving jar to within 1/8 inch of its top and each jam jar to within ½ inch of its top. Seal preserving jars quickly and tightly with rubber rings, glass or metal lids, and outer clips or screw-on lids. Jam jars should also be sealed at once. Put a circle of waxed paper over the surface of the jam or jelly, then cover with a screw-on metal lid or with a circle of cellophane kept in place with a rubber band. Label and date-mark the jars when they are cold, and store them in a cool, dry, dark place.

NOTE: If there is not enough food to fill the last jar completely, do not attempt to seal it. Refrigerate and use it as soon as possible.

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