

Spiced and Pickled Seafoods

Pickling with vinegar and spices is an ancient and easy method of preserving seafood. Commercial processors pickle only a few seafood species, but you can pickle almost any seafood at home. Store pickled seafood in the refrigerator at 32-38°F. Use pickled seafoods within 4-6 weeks for best flavor. Refrigerate seafood during all stages of the pickling process.

Ingredients and Equipment

Use high-quality seafood.

Avoid hard water, especially water high in iron, calcium or magnesium. Hard water can cause off-colors and flavors.

Use distilled white vinegar containing at least 4½% acetic acid (45 grains) to inhibit bacterial growth.

Pure granulated salt (sack salt) is best for pickling, but you can use table salt. Salt high in calcium and magnesium can cause off-colors and flavors.

Suitable containers for pickling seafood include large crocks or heavy glass, enamel or plastic containers. Metal containers may cause discoloration of the pickled seafood.

Pack pickled seafood in clean glass jars after the pickling process is complete. Cover the seafood with pickling sauce and close the jar lids tightly.

Herring

Clean herring thoroughly, cut off head, and trim off belly-flesh to the vent. Wash fish, drain, and pack loosely in a large container.

Prepare a brine from 2 cups salt, 2 pints vinegar, and 2 pints water. Cover the fish with brine and store in the refrigerator. Leave the fish in the brine until the salt has "struck through," but before the skin starts to wrinkle or lose color. The length of the cure depends upon your judgment, and varies with the temperature, freshness and size of the fish. The average time is about 5 days, but may vary from 3 to 7 days.

When the cure is complete, rinse the herring in cold running water for 1 to 3 hours to remove the salt, and then proceed with one of the following two methods:

Cut Spiced Herring

- 10 pounds cured herring
- ½ cup sliced onion
- 1 cup mixed pickling spices
- 2 quarts vinegar
- 1 quart water
- 5 tablespoons sugar

Cut cured herring across the body in pieces 1 to 1½ inches wide. Pack in layers in a large container with onion and pickling spices. Dissolve sugar in water and then add vinegar. Cover herring with sugar-water-

vinegar solution. Refrigerate for at least 24 hours. Repack the cut spiced herring into clean jars. Add a few fresh pickling spices, a bay leaf or two, and some chopped onion to each jar. Close the jar lids tightly. **Keep refrigerated.**

Rollmops

- 10 pounds cured herring
- 2 quarts vinegar
- ½ cup chopped onion
- 5 tablespoons sugar
- ¼ cup mixed pickling spices
- 8 quarts dill pickles

Simmer vinegar, onion, and sugar until onion is soft. Add spices and simmer 10 more minutes. Strain out onion and spices. Cool onion and spices, and sauce, separately in the refrigerator.

Cut cured herring into 2 fillets, removing the backbone. Roll each fillet around a small piece of dill pickle and fasten with a toothpick. Scatter some cooled onions and spices on bottom of a large container. Pack rollmops on end in layers in the container, adding some onions and spices between layers. Cover rollmops with cooled sauce. Store in the refrigerator for 2-3 days before using. **Keep refrigerated.**

Mackerel, Shad, and Salmon

- 10 pounds fish fillets
- 1 cup sliced onion
- ½ cup olive oil
- 1 tablespoon white pepper
- ½ tablespoon black pepper
- 1 tablespoon mustard seed
- 2 bay leaves
- ½ tablespoon cloves
- 1 quart vinegar
- 1 quart water
- salt for dredging

Cut thoroughly cleaned fish fillets into ¼-pound pieces. Wash pieces in cold water, drain, and dredge in salt. Place salted fish in refrigerator for ½ hour. Rinse off salt in cold running water. Cover fish with water and simmer for 10 minutes or until you can pierce the fish easily with a fork. Cool fish in a large container in the refrigerator.

Sauté onions in olive oil until they are yellow and soft. Add remaining ingredients and simmer 10 minutes longer. Cool sauce in refrigerator.

Pour cool sauce over fish to cover all pieces of fish. Refrigerate for 24 hours before using. Repack into clean jars if desired. Cover fish with sauce and close the jar lids tightly. **Keep refrigerated.**

Clams, Oysters, and Mussels

Scrub shells, and steam shellfish just enough to open the shells. Cool liquid from steaming in the refrigerator. Remove meat from shells and cool the meat in the refrigerator. Strain steaming liquid.

Add to each quart of steaming liquid:

- ½ pint vinegar
- ½ tablespoon cloves
- ½ tablespoon allspice
- ½ tablespoon red peppers
- ¼ teaspoon cracked whole mace

Simmer for 10 minutes. Cool in refrigerator.

Pack cooled meat in clean jars. Add a bay leaf or two, a few cloves and a thin slice of lemon to each jar. Pour cooled liquid into jars to cover the meat. Close jar lids tightly. **Keep refrigerated.**

Rockfish, Lingcod, and Sole

- 10 pounds fish fillets
- 2 quarts vinegar
- 3 pints water
- 2 cups chopped onion
- 1 clove garlic, chopped
- 1 tablespoon black pepper
- 4 bay leaves
- 1 tablespoon ground nutmeg
- 1 tablespoon cloves
- 1 tablespoon allspice
- 4 tablespoons sugar
- salt for dredging
- additional onion, bay leaves, and spices
- sliced lemon

Wash fillets in cold running water. Cut fillets into 2-inch lengths and dredge in salt. Pack salted fillets in a container and refrigerate for 2 hours.

Simmer vinegar, water, and next eight ingredients for 10 minutes. Rinse fish pieces in cold running water, add fish to sauce, and simmer for 10 minutes longer.

Remove fish from sauce and pack in clean jars. Add some additional chopped onion, a few fresh spices, and a slice of lemon to each jar. Strain sauce and bring it to a boil. Cover fish with hot sauce. Close jar lids tightly. **Keep refrigerated.**

Shrimp

- 5 pounds raw shrimp
- 10 pints water
- 2 pints vinegar
- ½ cup salt
- ½ tablespoon allspice
- ½ tablespoon cloves
- 1 tablespoon crushed red peppers
- ½ tablespoon mustard seed
- 10 bay leaves
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- lemon slices

Peel and wash shrimp. Simmer 8 pints water, 1 pint vinegar, salt, allspice, cloves, red peppers, mustard seed, and 6 bay leaves for 10 minutes. Bring to a boil and add shrimp. Boil shrimp 5 minutes. Remove shrimp from liquid and cool shrimp in the refrigerator.

Pack shrimp in clean jars. Add a bay leaf, a few fresh spices, and a slice of lemon to each jar. Fill jars with a solution of 2 pints water, 1 pint vinegar, and 1 tablespoon sugar. Close jar lids tightly. **Keep refrigerated.**

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