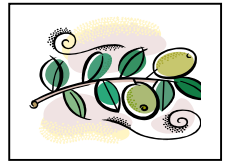


ABC's of Home-Cured, Green-Ripe Olives



**Pick olives for home-curing at the green or straw-colored stage.
Do not use black-ripe fruit; it becomes too soft during lye treatment.**

LYE: Treating olives with lye removes bitterness. Flake or household lye can be used for curing olives. **WARNING:** Lye can cause serious burns. **HANDLE WITH CARE.** Use lemon or vinegar to neutralize lye that splashes onto the skin. If lye gets into the eyes, bathe the eyes with running water and **CALL THE DOCTOR.** If lye is swallowed, **CALL THE DOCTOR;** drink milk or egg white-**DO NOT INDUCE VOMITING.**

To dispose of lye solutions, pour down the toilet and flush several times, or pour down the sink and run cold water to flush it out.

SALT: Regular table salt can be used in curing olives. Salt gives olives their characteristic flavor and serves as a preservative.

EQUIPMENT: Use wood, glass, stoneware or heavy, light-colored plastic containers. **DO NOT USE** galvanized or aluminum containers. Stirring utensils should be stainless steel or wood.

Be sure olives are completely covered by solution during all stages of curing. Exposure to air darkens olives.

Step-by-Step Procedures

A. Lye treatment

1. Soak 12 hours in lye solution-4 tablespoons lye in one-gallon cold water. (Solution should not be over 65 to 70 degrees F. before adding olives.) Stir occasionally.
2. Drain, and soak 12 more hours in fresh lye solution. Cut into a large olive-lye will change the flesh to a yellow-green color, penetrating to the pit.
3. If the lye has not penetrated to the pit, soak an additional 12 hours in a fresh lye solution.

B. Rinse

1. Rinse in cold water.
2. Soak 6 hours in fresh, cold water.
3. Change the water and soak 6 hours in fresh, cold water repeating 4 times a day for 4 to 8 days until there is no lye taste.

C. Brine cure

1. Cover with salt brine-6 tablespoons salt per gallon of water. Let stand two days. Refrigerate and use within two weeks. To keep longer than two weeks, follow the next three steps or process in a pressure canner.
2. Cover with salt brine-13 tablespoons salt per gallon of water. Store 1 week.
3. Cover with fresh salt brine-1 pound or 1 2/3 cups salt per gallon of water. Let stand 10 to 12 days.
4. Cover with fresh brine-1 pound or 1 2/3 cups salt per gallon of water. Store in a cool place, preferably a refrigerator.

Use within 2 to 4 months. Before eating, soak olives overnight in fresh water to remove excess salt. Use within 3 days after soaking.

CAUTION

Spoilage

If, at any time, the olives become soft or bad smelling, **DO NOT EAT OR EVEN TASTE THEM.** Mold or scum may form on the brine. Skim it off as soon as it appears. If the mold growth is heavy, destroy the olives.

Canning

Olives are a low-acid food and require careful handling to prevent botulism. Olives **MUST** be canned in a pressure canner. The complete directions for canning are in *Home Pickling of Olives*, University of California publication #2758 for \$4.00. Available by calling 559-456-7285.