



As we approach our holiday season we start thinking of festive hostess gifts that can be used for parties and feasts. Preserving our seasonal bounty is by far the best way to go. Sweet fresh produce always provides the best flavor and color. Apples and pears come to mind this month. If we do not have them in our own gardens then we have Apple Hill in our backyard (so to speak).

A spicy apple chutney makes a wonderful gift and is so versatile. Chutneys can easily accompany a cheese platter or hold its own with a pork roast, ham or chicken and turkey. If you prefer a meatless dish, this chutney would go well with some lentil dumplings, spicy chickpea patties or sweet potato chips.

Remember pears and apples are interchangeable in most recipes, including this one. If swapping in pear, consider using a firmer pear to maintain the texture of the product. You could also substitute dried cranberries for the raisins.



Apple Chutney

http://nchfp.uga.edu/how/can_06/apple_chutney.html

- 2 quarts chopped, cored, pared tart apples (about 10 medium)
- 1 cup chopped onions
- 1 cup chopped sweet red bell peppers (about 2 medium)
- 2 hot red peppers, seeded and chopped
- 1½ pounds seedless raisins
- 4 cups brown sugar
- 3 tablespoons mustard seed
- 2 tablespoons ground ginger
- 2 tablespoons ground allspice
- 2 teaspoons canning salt
- 1 clove garlic, crushed
- 1 quart white vinegar (5%)

Yield: About 6 pint jars

Procedure: Combine all ingredients; simmer until thick, about 1 hour and 15 minutes. As mixture thickens stir frequently to prevent sticking.

Pour boiling hot chutney into hot jars, leaving ½ inch headspace. Remove air bubbles and adjust headspace if needed. Wipe rims of jars with a dampened clean paper towel; adjust two-piece metal canning lids. Process in a **boiling water bath** for 10 minutes if below 1000ft. in elevation, 15 minutes is between 1000-6000ft and 20 minutes above 6000ft.

Apples and cheddar cheese are a match made in heaven. A friend uses a similar recipe with her mango chutney, but I am stealing the idea for our apple chutney.



Pecan and Cheddar Cheese Balls

<http://www.seriousseats.com/recipes/2010/11/pecan-cheddar-cheese-balls-recipe.html>

- 4 ounces shredded sharp cheddar
- 12 ounces cream cheese at room temperature
- 1 teaspoon smoked paprika
- 1 teaspoon cayenne pepper sauce
- 1 tablespoon honey
- 2 cups finely chopped pecans

Procedures

In a mixing bowl, combine cheddar, cream cheese, paprika, pepper sauce, and honey with rubber spatula. When well blended, roll mixture into single ball or several bite size balls (about 1 inch in diameter).

Spread chopped pecans on pie plate. Roll cheese ball(s) through, making sure every side is coated with pecans. Wrap cheese ball(s) in plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 2 hours. Serve with crackers or raw vegetables.