**Fermented Dill Pickles**

Use the following quantities for each gallon capacity of your container.

* 4 lbs of 4-inch pickling cucumbers
* 2 tbsp dill seed or 4 to 5 heads fresh or dry dill weed
* 1/2 cup salt
* 1/4 cup vinegar (5 percent)
* 8 cups water and one or more of the following ingredients:
  + 2 cloves garlic (optional)
  + 2 dried red peppers (optional)
  + 2 tsp whole mixed pickling spices (optional)

**Procedure:** Wash cucumbers. Cut 1/16-inch slice off blossom end and discard. Leave 1/4-inch of stem attached. Place half of dill and spices on bottom of a clean, suitable container. Add cucumbers, remaining dill, and spices.

Dissolve salt in vinegar and water and pour over cucumbers. Add suitable cover and weight. Store where temperature is between 70ºF and 75ºF for about 3 to 4 weeks while fermenting. Temperatures of 55º to 65ºF are acceptable, but the fermentation will take 5 to 6 weeks. Avoid temperatures above 80ºF, or pickles will become too soft during fermentation.

Check the container several times a week and promptly remove surface scum or mold. **Caution: If the pickles become soft, slimy, or develop a disagreeable odor, discard them.** Fully fermented pickles may be stored in the original container for about 4 to 6 months, provided they are refrigerated and surface scum and molds are removed regularly. Canning fully fermented pickles is a better way to store them.

To can them, pour the brine into a pan, heat slowly to a boil, and simmer 5 minutes. Filter brine through paper coffee filters to reduce cloudiness, if desired. Fill jar with pickles and hot brine, leaving 1/2-inch headspace. Adjust lids and process as recommended in [Table 1](https://nchfp.uga.edu/how/can_06/dill_pickles.html#tble1) , or use the low-temperature pasteurization treatment described below.

The following treatment results in a better product texture but must be carefully managed to avoid possible spoilage. Place jars in a canner filled half way with warm (120º to 140ºF) water. Then, add hot water to a level 1 inch above jars. Heat the water enough to maintain 180º to 185º F water temperature for 30 minutes. Check with a candy or jelly thermometer to be certain that the water temperature is at least 180ºF during the entire 30 minutes. Temperatures higher than 185ºF may cause unnecessary softening of pickles.

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| **Table 1.** Recommended process time for **Dill Pickles** in a boiling-water canner. | | | | |
|  | | **Process Time at Altitudes of** | | |
| **Style of Pack** | **Jar Size** | **0 - 1,000 ft** | **1,001 - 6,000 ft** | **Above 6,000 ft** |
| Raw | Pints | **10 min** | 15 | 20 |
| Quarts | **15** | 20 | 25 |

This document was adapted from the "Complete Guide to Home Canning," Agriculture Information Bulletin No. 539, USDA, revised 2015.  
  
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