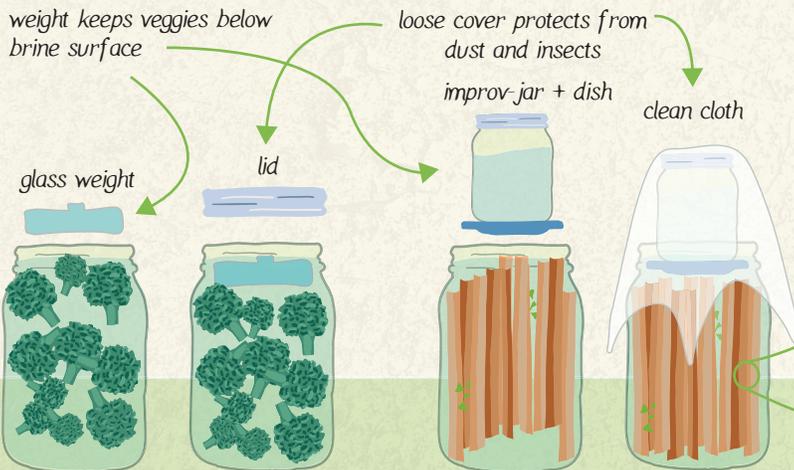


# PICKLE IT!

Pickling is a simple, ancient method to prepare and preserve all kinds of food, especially vegetables. Veggies contain benign bacteria that can, for example, turn a cucumber into a pickle with just a bit of water and salt! This is a simple and very safe process. Be sure to check the tips and tricks on the flip side.



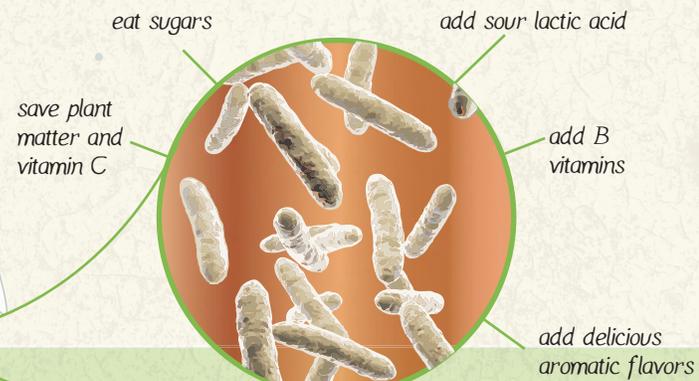
## TWO WAYS TO WEIGHT



- 4** Use a weight to keep the veggies below the brine surface. This is crucial!
- Cover with a clean cloth or loose lid that will allow pressure to escape.
- Keep the jar out of direct sunlight, and where you can check it daily. Skim any "bloom" that appears on the surface of the brine. When needed, top off brine with water to keep veggies submerged.

## PICKLING MICROBES

*lactobacillus, your new best friends*



- 5** Begin tasting after a few days. When your pickles have reached peak flavor (you decide) move them and their brine to the fridge where the fermentation will slow and they will keep for months.
- If your pickles begin to smell rotten or become slimy, they've been invaded by spoiler microbes. It's yucky, but not dangerous. It happens occasionally. Just put them on your compost pile and start over.

## INSPIRATION

So many vegetables can be pickled with delicious results! Cut larger veg into smaller pieces to pickle them faster and more successfully.



cucumbers (unwaxed)  
summer squash  
zucchini  
string beans  
asparagus  
sweet corn  
okra  
bell peppers  
hot peppers  
cabbage (sauerkraut!)  
beets  
turnips  
carrots  
cauliflower  
radishes  
green tomatoes  
tomatillos  
brussels sprouts  
artichokes  
broccoli



Difficult pickling: mushrooms, eggplant.

## HERBS

**Fresh:** dill, thyme, oregano, rosemary, parsley, marjoram, savory, cilantro, ginger root, garlic, garlic, garlic

**Dried:** thyme, dill seed, rosemary, oregano, majoram, red pepper flakes

**Spices:** mustard seed, coriander, peppercorns, cumin, turmeric, smoked paprika

## SALT

Sea salt is best, it's got trace minerals that help keep pickles crunchy. Kosher salt is fine - if using Morton's kosher, reduce the amount by about 1/4. Avoid iodized salt, which can impart an off flavor and color.



## SCIENCE

There are two main ways of making pickles. Quick pickles are made with vinegar and are canned for long preservation. Traditional fermented pickles preserve themselves with live biota, AKA lacto-fermentation. This happens on a microscopic level with our friends, bacteria, growing right in your pickle jar, yes, on purpose!

When you submerge a vegetable in brine it creates an anerobic environment—the vegetables are sealed off from gummy air and protected from spoiler microbes.

Bacteria already living inside vegetables create the ferment. These bacteria chow down on vegetable sugars and produce antimicrobial substances: lactic acid (it's sour), carbon dioxide, and alcohol.

All this happens without damaging the plant material and vitamins, plus lacto-fermentation creates lots of B vitamins and natural chemicals that enhance flavor.

Pickles have great pro-biotic effects— good for digestion and for the health of all the good biota that live inside of us.

## CONTAINERS

People make good pickles in a variety of containers, from easily acquired glass jars, to straight-sided ceramic pickle crocks, and even in holes in the ground!

Make pickles in any container that allows you to weight the floating veg to keep them below the brine surface. Avoid aluminum, copper and brass because they're acid-reactive.

## WEIGHTS

Veggies just want to float! A weight is needed to keep them below brine. Special pickle weights are made for both Mason jars and pickle crocks and are easier to manage than the jar-and-dish method. Purchased weights are often made of glass, ceramic or wood. You can also wedge a thick cabbage leaf or slice of apple in the mouth of the jar.

## CULTURE

Folks have been fermenting pickles for over 4,000 years, and pickles are made by virtually all human cultures.

Japan has *tsukemono* made of daikon radish, turnips, ginger, gobo (burdock root) and seaweed. China pickles cucumbers, peppers, radishes and cabbage. Korea's famous spicy *kimchi*, often made from napa cabbage, garlic and hot peppers is currently an American favorite.

The people of the Mideast pickle a great variety of veg, particularly olives and eggplant. Best known European pickles include kosher dills, sauerkraut, green tomatoes, carrots and beans.

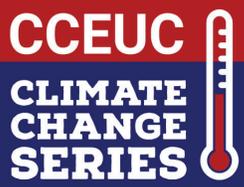
## PICKLING TIPS

Good pickles taste like good pickles. If you have a batch that smells nasty, or has become slimy, it's telling you that some wild microbes somehow moved in on your yummy vegetables and overcame friendly microbes. The interlopers aren't toxic, but are not delicious, so toss it all in your compost and make another batch!

Use fresh, unblemished vegetables. The easiest and quickest vegetables for beginners are sliced cucumbers and shredded cabbage - before you know it, you will have some exquisitely tasty tidbits!

Fermentation happens faster in a warm environment, so keep a closer eye. For deeper flavor, keep the jar from 60 to 70 degrees, and it will ferment more slowly.

As the pickles ferment, your brine becomes nutritionally rich. Since the surface is exposed to air, random yeast and mold microbes will be attracted. If you see a pale film, remove the weight, if necessary, and, using a spoon, skim as much of it off as possible. It's not dangerous, but it can make your pickles mushy.



Help us write *Turning the Tables: Cooking to Thrive in the 21st Century*, a cookbook with easy, delicious, earth-friendly meals! Try this recipe and send us feedback and photos. If we use your contributions in the final cookbook, we'll include a personal thank you! *Turning the Tables* is a project of Cornell Cooperative Extension Ulster County, Maria Reidelbach and Stick to Local Studio.

More information and recipes at [turningthetablescookbook.com](http://turningthetablescookbook.com)

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