

# PUTTING

# UP

GEORGIA CHEF AND CANNING ENTHUSIAST  
**HUGH ACHESON** SHOWS US HOW HE CELEBRATES—  
AND **PRESERVES**—HIS **SUMMER** BOUNTY

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Pickled  
Pear  
Onions

Pickled  
Cremini  
Mushrooms

Pear and  
Golden  
Raisin  
Ginger  
Chutney

Bread 'n'  
Butter  
Zucchini

Pickled  
Okra

Pickled  
Turnips

PROPS: YOUNG GINNY BRANCH; FOOD STYLING: TAMI HARDEMAN



Since you won't be eating the fruits of your labor at this party (most put-ups need a few days to fully develop), serve a menu that's inspired by the theme: Pickle onions and okra up to a week beforehand so assembly is a snap; even the pimiento cheese can be made up to three days ahead.



Pimiento Cheese  
with Pickled  
Okra on Toast  
*Recipe, page 128*

**P**LANTING THAT EXTRA OKRA SOUNDED like a good idea at the time. Saturday morning's trip to the farmers' market resulted in 10-too-many pounds of zucchini or an orchard's worth of plums now sitting on your counter. Sound familiar?

Don't get overwhelmed. With a little help from your friends and a set of canning jars, you can turn a bumper crop into a bumpin' shindig—or what we Southerners like to call a “put-up” party. Not only will you put all of that ripe produce to good use, but also your pals will think highly of your generous spirit when you send them home with jars of summer's bounty.

Canning in a group setting might sound like a hot mess waiting to happen, but chef and author of *Pick and Pickle* Hugh Acheson says put-up parties shouldn't be high-stress entertaining. All it takes is a little prep work, the right equipment, and a few

easy recipes to pull off a laid-back preserving soiree. “Pickling is a fun way to share an important Southern foodway with each other,” he says. “Anyone, regardless of skill, can put up, and it's endless in creativity and possibility.”

We asked Acheson to invite a few of his hometown friends over for an afternoon get-together in Athens, Georgia, to show us how it's done.

To up the fun factor and keep the hard work to a minimum, Acheson shared his go-to put-ups that will keep in the refrigerator so you can skip the hot and bothersome water bath. Plus, he gives us the scoop on his favorite theme-appropriate nibbles for your guests, and suggestions for how to use your post-party creations. So what are you waiting for? Those fresh fruits and veggies aren't getting any younger. Call up your friends—preferably the ones with the prolific pear trees—and use our handy guide for setting up your own put-up party.



Gibson Martini  
with Pickled  
Pearl Onions  
*Recipe, page 128*



## HUGH ACHESON'S PUT-UP PARTY TIPS

### KEEP THE GUEST LIST SHORT

Invite up to eight guests; any more will cramp the kitchen.

### PLAN AHEAD

Coordinate with your guests to figure out who is bringing vinegar, pounds of produce, or that extra bottle of wine.

### PREP JARS

Sterilize canning jars right before guests arrive by boiling them for 10 minutes, then let them air dry.

### DELEGATE DUTIES

Assign each guest a task, like chopping up zucchini or measuring out spices, so everyone has a part in the process.

### FORM AN ASSEMBLY LINE

Once the ingredients are prepped, everyone can assume a role: packing jars, adding brine, or sealing lids.

### MAKE LABELS

Be sure every jar is labeled with its contents, packing date, and how long it keeps.





Pickled Cremini  
Mushrooms  
Recipe, page 128



Pickled Plums  
Recipe, page 129



Pickled Turnips  
Recipe, page 129



Pear and Golden Raisin  
Ginger Chutney  
Recipe, page 129



Bread 'n' Butter  
Zucchini  
Recipe, page 129

## HOW TO ENJOY YOUR JARS

### PICKLED CREMINI MUSHROOMS

- Toss on a romaine salad.
- Garnish a Bloody Mary.
- Mince and mix into ground beef for hamburgers or meatloaf.
- Fold into an omelet.

### PICKLED PLUMS

- Drizzle over vanilla ice cream.
- Topple onto toast with butter and plum jam.
- Pair with a pork tenderloin.
- Layer on a poached or grilled chicken sandwich with green onions and mayo.

### BREAD 'N' BUTTER ZUCCHINI

- Puree and stir into a vinaigrette.
- Stack alongside fried chicken.
- Chop them up for deviled eggs.
- Tuck them inside a pork taco.

### PICKLED TURNIPS

- Stuff inside a pita sandwich.
- Try as a crunchy counterpoint for grilled salmon.
- Accompany braised lamb.
- Enjoy them on their own. (They're *really* that delicious.)

### PEAR & GOLDEN RAISIN GINGER CHUTNEY

- Include as a sweet condiment for a cheese board.
- Spoon on top of pork chops.
- Serve on the side with a poached fish like halibut.
- Spread on a toasted roast beef sandwich with crisp lettuce.



PICKLED OKRA

- 2 lbs. fresh okra
- 3 jalapeño chiles, seeds removed, thinly sliced
- 3 garlic cloves, halved
- 3 fresh dill sprigs, halved
- 1 qt. apple cider vinegar
- 1 1/2 cups water
- 1/4 cup kosher salt
- 1 Tbsp. yellow mustard seeds

1. Divide and pack okra, jalapeño slices, garlic, and dill evenly among 6 (1-pint) canning jars.

2. Combine vinegar, water, salt, and mustard seeds in a stockpot, and bring to a boil over high. Remove from heat. Carefully ladle hot vinegar mixture over okra mixture in jars, leaving 1/2 inch of room at the top of each. Wipe rims. Cover with lids; screw on bands. Cool jars to room temperature. Okra will keep up to 2 months in the refrigerator.

**MAKES** 6 pints **ACTIVE** 10 min. **TOTAL** 10 min.

PIMIENTO CHEESE WITH PICKLED OKRA ON TOAST

- 1 lb. sharp white Cheddar cheese, grated (4 cups)
- 2 large red bell peppers, roasted, peeled, seeds removed, and diced
- 1/2 cup mayonnaise
- 1 tsp. Dijon mustard
- 1/2 tsp. smoked paprika
- 1/2 tsp. kosher salt
- Pinch of cayenne pepper
- 1 baguette
- 2 Tbsp. olive oil
- Pickled Okra

1. Preheat oven to 400°F. Stir together Cheddar, bell peppers, mayonnaise, mustard, paprika, salt, and cayenne in a large bowl.

2. Diagonally cut baguette into 1/2-inch slices. Brush both sides of baguette slices with olive oil, and place slices on a baking sheet. Bake for 3 minutes. Turn bread slices, and bake until toasted, about 3 minutes. Remove from

oven, and cool. Serve toast with pickled okra and pimiento cheese.

**MAKES** 3 cups pimiento cheese **ACTIVE** 15 min. **TOTAL** 15 min.

GIBSON MARTINI WITH PICKLED PEARL ONIONS

- 2 1/2 oz. (5 Tbsp.) gin (such as Beefeater)
- 1/2 oz. (1 Tbsp.) dry vermouth (such as Dolin)
- 3 Pickled Pearl Onions

Combine gin and vermouth in an ice-filled cocktail glass. Stir gently to cool. Strain into an ice-cold martini glass; garnish with Pickled Pearl Onions.

**MAKES** 1 (3-oz.) martini **ACTIVE** 5 min. **TOTAL** 5 min.

Pickled Pearl Onions

- 1 1/4 cups apple cider vinegar
- 1 1/4 cups water
- 2 Tbsp. granulated sugar
- 1 1/2 Tbsp. pickling salt
- 6 dried allspice berries
- 6 black peppercorns
- 1 whole clove
- 3 (10-oz.) pkg. fresh pearl onions, peeled according to package directions

1. Combine vinegar, water, sugar, pickling salt, allspice berries, peppercorns, and clove in a nonreactive saucepan; bring to a boil over high. Add onions; reduce heat to low, and simmer 5 minutes.

2. Transfer onions into 1 (1-quart) canning jar or 2 (1-pint) canning jars, leaving 1/2 inch of room at the top, reserving liquid in saucepan.

3. Carefully ladle hot vinegar mixture over onions in jars, leaving 1/2 inch of room at the top of each. Discard any remaining liquid. Wipe jar rims. Cover at once with metal lids; screw on bands. Cool jars to room temperature. Onions will keep up to a month in refrigerator.

**MAKES** 1 quart **ACTIVE** 10 min. **TOTAL** 20 min.

PICKLED CREMINI MUSHROOMS

While the miso, a fermented soy-bean paste, is optional, Acheson likes it for its savory depth. Miso is available at Publix and most major supermarkets.

- 6 qt., plus 1 1/2 cups water, divided
- 4 lb. fresh cremini mushrooms
- 4 cups white wine vinegar
- 6 Tbsp. yellow or white miso (optional)
- 2 Tbsp. kosher salt
- 1 1/2 tsp. crushed red pepper
- 1 tsp. smoked paprika
- 3/4 cup finely chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
- 3 Tbsp. finely chopped fresh rosemary
- 3 Tbsp. minced fresh garlic
- 3 tsp. finely chopped fresh thyme

1. Bring 6 quarts of the water to a boil in a large stockpot over high. Trim 1/4 inch away from each

mushroom stem. Quarter mushrooms. Add mushrooms to water; cook 45 seconds. Drain and transfer mushrooms to a large bowl.

2. Combine vinegar, miso, salt, red pepper, paprika, and remaining 1 1/2 cups water in a medium saucepan; bring to a boil over high.

3. Drain mushrooms again. Add parsley, rosemary, garlic, and thyme to mushrooms; toss to combine.

4. Add boiling vinegar mixture to mushrooms in bowl. Let stand at room temperature 5 minutes. Carefully ladle mushroom mixture evenly into 6 (1-pint) canning jars. Wipe rims. Cover at once with lids; screw on bands. Cool jars to room temperature. Refrigerate 2 days before serving. Pickled mushrooms will keep up to 1 week in refrigerator.

**MAKES** 6 pints **ACTIVE** 30 min. **TOTAL** 2 days, 30 min., including 2 days chilling

6 CANNING ESSENTIALS



BREAD 'N' BUTTER ZUCCHINI

“Bread ‘n’ butter doesn’t have to mean sugary,” says Acheson. For some spice to counter the slight sweetness of these pickles, he added a smidge of red pepper flakes, anise-like fennel seeds, and allspice berries.

- 7 1/2 cups 1/4-inch-thick zucchini slices
- 2 medium-size sweet onions, thinly sliced
- 2 1/2 Tbsp. pickling salt, divided
- 3/4 cup firmly packed fresh celery leaves, torn
- 2 1/2 cups apple cider vinegar
- 2 cups water
- 3/4 cup granulated sugar
- 1 1/2 tsp. yellow mustard seeds
- 3/4 tsp. curry powder
- 3/4 tsp. celery seeds
- 1/2 tsp. crushed red pepper
- 1/2 tsp. fennel seeds
- 6 dried allspice berries

1. Combine zucchini and onions in a large nonreactive bowl. Add 1 1/4 tablespoons of the pickling salt; toss well to coat. Let stand at room temperature 1 hour.

2. Transfer zucchini mixture to a colander, and rinse thoroughly to remove pickling salt. Drain, and transfer to a medium bowl. Stir in celery leaves.

3. Divide and pack mixture evenly into 6 (1-pint) canning jars, leaving 1/2 inch of room at the top of each.

4. Combine vinegar and next eight ingredients with remaining 1 1/4 tablespoons pickling salt in a medium saucepan; bring to a boil over high. Reduce heat to low, and simmer 5 minutes. Remove from heat.

5. Carefully ladle hot vinegar mixture over zucchini mixture in jars, leaving 1/2 inch of room at the top of each. Wipe rims. Cover at once with lids; screw on bands. Cool jars to room temperature. Pickles will keep up to a month in refrigerator.

**MAKES** 6 pints **ACTIVE** 20 min. **TOTAL** 20 min.

PICKLED PLUMS

Pickled peaches are a Southern classic, and plums take to pre-serving just as well. Acheson uses rice vinegar for a lighter, less acidic pickle. Be sure to choose firm plums so they don’t turn to mush in the jar.

- 2 1/2 cups rice vinegar
- 2 1/2 cups apple cider vinegar
- 2 cups water
- 1/2 cup plus 2 Tbsp. light brown sugar
- 5 Tbsp. pickling salt
- 5 tsp. ground ginger
- 5 lb. firm black plums (18 to 24 plums), quartered
- 8 pieces whole star anise
- 4 cinnamon sticks, broken in half

1. Combine rice vinegar and next five ingredients in a stockpot. Bring to a boil over high; reduce heat to medium, and simmer 5 minutes.

2. Divide and pack plum quarters evenly into 8 (1-pint) canning jars. Add 1 piece star anise and 1 cinnamon stick half to each jar. Carefully ladle hot vinegar mixture over plums in jars, leaving 1/2 inch of room at the top of each. Wipe rims. Cover at once with lids; screw on bands. Let stand 2 hours. Chill 1 week before serving. Plums will keep up to 2 months in refrigerator.

**MAKES** 8 pints **ACTIVE** 20 min. **TOTAL** 1 week, 2 hours, 20 min., including 1 week chilling

PEAR AND GOLDEN RAISIN GINGER CHUTNEY

This fruity, nutty chutney is Acheson’s play on Italian caponata, a relish typically made with eggplant. “I swapped eggplant for pears, and pears love raisins and raisins love pine nuts,” he explains. It’s not hard to find Bartlett pears this time of year, but any soft-fleshed pear will do.

- 2 Tbsp. olive oil
- 1 shallot, minced

SAFETY FIRST

While putting-up produce can be plenty fun, you must play it safe. To eliminate potentially dangerous microbes in food, it’s important to follow brine ratios and cook times. Fridge put-ups, like the ones here, will keep in the refrigerator one to three months, unless they have garlic or oil in them, in which case their lifespan goes down to about a week. If you want a put-up that stays shelf-stable for a year, process any of these recipes according to the guidelines by the National Center for Home Food Preservation (also located in beautiful Athens, Georgia). You can find the NCHFP’s guidelines at [nchfp.uga.edu](http://nchfp.uga.edu).

- 2 lb. Bartlett pears (about 4 pears), cored and diced
- 1 Tbsp. fresh lemon juice
- 1/2 cup white wine vinegar
- 1/3 cup golden raisins
- 1/4 cup packed light brown sugar
- 1 Tbsp. finely chopped fresh ginger
- 1 tsp. kosher salt
- 1/2 tsp. yellow mustard seeds
- 1/4 tsp. ground cinnamon
- 1/4 tsp. ground nutmeg
- 1/4 tsp. lemon zest
- 1/3 cup pine nuts, toasted

1. Heat olive oil in a Dutch oven over medium. Add shallot, and cook, stirring occasionally, 2 minutes. Add pears and lemon juice, and cook, stirring occasionally, until softened, about 5 minutes.

2. Add vinegar, raisins, brown sugar, ginger, salt, mustard seeds, cinnamon, nutmeg, and lemon zest; cook, stirring occasionally, until pears are softened, 20 to 25 minutes. Remove from heat. Fold in pine nuts.

3. Spoon pear mixture into 3 (1/2-pint) canning jars. Cool 15 minutes. Wipe jar rims. Cover at once with metal lids; screw on bands. Chill until ready to use. Chutney will keep up to 2 weeks in refrigerator.

**MAKE** about 3 cups **ACTIVE** 30 min. **TOTAL** 30 min.

PICKLED TURNIPS

These Middle Eastern-inspired pickles get their pink color from beet halves nestled into the jars. “Use turnips that are smaller than a baseball but larger than a golf ball,” says Acheson.

- 3 lb. turnips
- 3 small red beets, halved
- 6 small garlic cloves
- 4 cups water
- 1 1/2 cups apple cider vinegar
- 6 Tbsp. pickling salt
- 1 1/2 tsp. ground sumac
- 6 bay leaves

1. Peel turnips, and remove tops. Cut turnips into 2-inch pieces. Divide turnip pieces evenly among 6 (1-pint) canning jars. Add 1 beet half and 1 garlic clove to each jar, leaving 1 inch of room at the top of each jar.

2. Combine water and next four ingredients in a medium saucepan, and bring to a boil.

3. Carefully pour vinegar mixture over turnip mixture in jars, leaving 1/2 inch of room at the top of each. Wipe jar rims. Cover at once with metal lids; screw on bands. Let stand at room temperature 1 week; chill. Turnips will keep in refrigerator up to 3 months.

**MAKES** 6 pints **ACTIVE** 20 min. **TOTAL** 1 week, 25 min., including 1 week chilling 🍴