

CHAPTER XXII.

PICKLES.

OBSERVATIONS ON PICKLES.

THE first requisite in making pickles is to have unadulterated vinegar, for all the expense and trouble bestowed upon them is often entirely lost in consequence of ingredients being mixed with this which soften, and sometimes even partially decompose, the substances immersed in it. That which is home-made is generally found for all purposes to answer best, and it may be prepared of almost any degree of strength by increasing the ordinary proportion of fruit and sugar, or whatever else may be used for it. The refuse of raisin-wine, and green gooseberries, may both be converted into excellent vinegar: but unless the pickles be quite covered with their liquor, and well protected from the air, and from the influence of damp, which is more than anything destructive of them, the purity of the vinegar will not preserve them eatable. We can confidently recommend to the reader the rather limited number of receipts which follow, and which might easily be multiplied did the size of our volume permit. Pickling is so easy a process, however, that when in any degree properly acquired, it may be extended to almost every kind of fruit and vegetable successfully. A few of the choicer kinds will nevertheless be found generally more acceptable than a greater variety of inferior preparations. Mushrooms, gherkins, walnuts, lemons, eschalots, and peaches, for all of which we have given minute directions, will furnish as much choice as is commonly required.

TO PICKLE CHERRIES.

Leave about an inch of their stalks on some fine, sound cherries, that are not over-ripe; put them into a jar, cover them with cold vinegar, and let them stand for three weeks; pour off two-thirds of the liquor and replace it with fresh vinegar; then, after having drained it from the fruit, boil the whole with an ounce of coriander seed, a small blade of mace, a few grains of cayenne, or a teaspoonful of white peppercorns, and four bruised cochineals to every quart, all tied loosely in a fold of muslin. Let the pickle become quite cold before it is added to the cherries: in a month they will be fit for use. The vinegar which is poured from the fruit makes a good syrup of itself when boiled with a pound of sugar to the pint, but it is improved by having some fresh raspberries, cherries, or currants previously infused in it for three or four days.

TO PICKLE GHERKINS,* OR CUCUMBERS.

Let the gherkins be gathered on a dry day, before the frost has touched them; take off the blossoms, put them into a stone jar, and pour over them sufficient boiling brine to cover them well. The following day take them out, wipe them singly, lay them into a clean stone jar,

* Small cucumbers. All cucumbers may be pickled in the same way.

with a dozen bay-leaves over them, and pour upon them the following pickle, when it is boiling fast: as much vinegar as will more than cover the gherkins by an inch or two, with an ounce and a quarter of salt, a quarter-ounce of black peppercorns, an ounce and a half of ginger sliced, or slightly bruised, and two small blades of mace to every quart; put a plate over the jar, and leave it for two days, then drain off the vinegar, and heat it afresh: when it boils, throw in the gherkins, and keep them just on the point of simmering for two or three minutes; pour the whole back into the jar, put the plate again upon it, and let it remain until the pickle is quite cold, when a skin, or two separate folds of thick brown paper, must be tied closely over it. The gherkins thus pickled are very crisp, and excellent in flavour, and the colour is sufficiently good to satisfy the prudent housekeeper, to whom the brilliant and *poisonous* green produced by boiling the vinegar in a brass skillet (a process constantly recommended in books of cookery) is anything but attractive. To satisfy ourselves of the effect produced by the action of the acid on the metal, we had a few gherkins thrown into some vinegar which was boiling in a brass pan, and nothing could be more beautiful than the colour which they almost immediately exhibited. We fear this dangerous method is too often resorted to in preparing pickles for sale.

Brine to pour on gherkins;—6 ozs. salt to each quart water: 24 hours. Pickle:—to each quart vinegar, salt, 1½ oz.; black peppercorns, ¼ oz.; ginger, sliced or bruised, 1½ oz.; mace, 2 small blades; bay-leaves; 24 to 100 gherkins, more when the flavour is liked: 2 days. Gherkins simmered in vinegar, 2 to 3 minutes.

PICKLES.

Obs.—The quantity of vinegar required to cover the gherkins will be shown by that of the brine: so much depends upon their size, that it is impossible to direct the measure exactly. A larger proportion of spice can be added at pleasure.

TO PICKLE NASTURTIUMS.

These should be gathered quite young, and a portion of the buds, when very small, should be mixed with them. Prepare a pickle by dissolving an ounce and a half of salt in a quart of pale vinegar, and throw in the berries as they become fit, from day to day. They are used instead of capers for sauce, and by some persons are preferred to them. When purchased for pickling, put them at once into a jar, and cover them well with the vinegar.

TO PICKLE PEACHES.

Take, at their full growth, just before they begin to ripen, six large or eight moderate-sized peaches; wipe the down from them, and put them into brine that will float an egg. In three days let them be taken out, and drained on a sieve reversed for several hours. Boil in a quart of vinegar for ten minutes two ounces of whole white pepper, two of ginger slightly bruised, a teaspoonful of salt, two blades of mace, half a pound of mustard-seed, and a half-teaspoonful of cayenne tied in a bit of muslin. Lay the peaches into a jar, and pour the boiling pickle on them: in two months they will be fit for use.

Peaches, 6 or 8: in brine 3 days. Vinegar, 1 quart; whole white

pepper, 2 ozs.; bruised ginger, 2 ozs.; salt, 1 teaspoonful; mace, 2 blades; mustard-seed, $\frac{3}{4}$ lb.: 10 minutes.

Obs.—The peaches may be converted into excellent mangoes by cutting out from the stalk-end of each a round of sufficient size to allow the stone to be extracted: this should be done after they are taken from the brine. They may be filled with *very fresh* mustard-seed, previously washed in a little vinegar; to this a small portion of garlic, or bruised eschalots, cayenne, horse-radish, chilies (the most appropriate of any), or spice of any kind may be added, to the taste. The part cut out must be replaced, and secured with a packthread crossed over the fruit.

TO PICKLE MUSHROOMS.

Select for this purpose, if they can be procured, the smallest buttons of the wild or *meadow* mushrooms, in preference to those which are artificially raised, and let them be as freshly gathered as possible. Cut the stems off quite close, and clean them with a bit of new flannel slightly moistened, and dipped in fine salt; throw them as they are done into plenty of spring-water, mixed with a large spoonful of salt, but drain them from it quickly afterwards, and lay them into a soft cloth to dry, or the moisture which hangs about them will too much weaken the pickle. For each quart of the mushrooms thus prepared, take *nearly* a quart of the palest white wine vinegar (this is far superior to the distilled vinegar generally used for the purpose, and the variation in the colour of the mushrooms will be very slight), and add to it a heaped teaspoonful of salt, half an ounce of whole white pepper, an ounce of ginger, sliced or lightly bruised, about the fourth of a saltspoonful of cayenne, tied in a small bit of muslin, and two large blades of mace; to these may be added half a small nutmeg, sliced; but too much spice will entirely overpower the fine natural flavour of the mushrooms. When the pickle boils, throw them in, and boil them in it over a clear fire moderately fast from six to nine minutes, or somewhat longer, should they *not* be very small. When they are much disproportioned in size, the larger ones should have two minutes boil before the others are thrown into the vinegar. As soon as they are tolerably tender, put them at once into small stone jars, or into *warm* wide-necked bottles, and divide the spice equally amongst them. The following day, or as soon as they are perfectly cold, secure them from the air with large corks, or tie skins and paper over them. They should be stored in a dry place, and guarded from severe frost. When the colour of the mushrooms is more considered than the excellence of the pickle, the distilled vinegar can be used for it. The reader may rely upon this receipt as a really good one; we have had it many times proved, and it is altogether our own.

Mushroom-buttons (without the stems), 2 quarts; palest white wine vinegar, short $\frac{1}{2}$ gallon; salt, *large* dessertspoonful, or $1\frac{1}{2}$ oz.; white peppercorns, 1 oz.; whole ginger, 2 ozs.; cayenne, small $\frac{1}{2}$ saltspoonful; 1 small nutmeg.

MUSHROOMS IN BRINE; (*for winter use.*) (*Very good.*)

We have had small mushroom-buttons excellently preserved through the winter prepared as follows, and we therefore give the exact proportions which we had used for them, though the same quantity of brine would possibly allow of rather more mushrooms in it. Prepare them exactly as for the preceding pickle, and measure them after the stems

are taken off. For each quart, boil together for five minutes two quarts of water, with half a pound of common white salt, a small dessertspoonful of white peppercorns, a couple of blades of mace, and a race of ginger; take off the scum thoroughly, and throw in the mushrooms; boil them gently for about five minutes, then put them into well-warmed, wide-necked bottles, and let them become perfectly cold, pour a little good salad oil on the top, cork them with new corks, and tie bladder over, or cover them with two separate bladders. When wanted for use, soak the mushrooms in warm water till the brine is sufficiently extracted.

Mushrooms, 1 quart; water, $\frac{1}{2}$ gallon; salt, $\frac{1}{2}$ lb.; peppercorns, 1 small dessertspoonful; mace, 2 blades; ginger, 1 race: 5 minutes. Mushrooms, in brine, 5 minutes.

TO PICKLE WALNUTS.

The walnuts for this pickle must be gathered while a pin can pierce them easily, for when once the shell can be felt, they have ceased to be in a proper state for it. Make sufficient brine to cover them well, with six ounces of salt to the gallon of water; take off the scum, which will rise to the surface as the salt dissolves, throw in the walnuts, and stir them night and morning; change the brine every three days, and if they are wanted for immediate eating, leave them in it for twelve days; otherwise, drain them from it in nine, spread them on dishes, and let them remain exposed to the air until they become black; this will be in twelve hours, or less. Make a pickle for them with something more than half a gallon of vinegar to the hundred, a teaspoonful of salt, two ounces of black pepper, three of bruised ginger, a drachm of mace, and from a quarter to half an ounce of cloves (of which some may be stuck into three or four small onions), and four ounces of mustard-seed. Boil the whole of these together for about five minutes; have the walnuts ready in a stone jar, or jars, and pour it on them as it is taken from the fire. When the pickle is quite cold, cover the jar securely, and store it in a dry place. Keep the walnuts always well covered with the vinegar, and boil that which is added to them.

Walnuts, 100; in brine made with 12 ozs. salt to 2 quarts water, and changed twice or more, 9 or 12 days. Vinegar, *full* $\frac{1}{2}$ gallon; salt, 1 teaspoonful; whole black pepper, 2 ozs.; ginger, 3 ozs.; mace, 1 drachm; cloves, $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ oz.; small onions, 4 to 6; mustard-seed, 4 ozs.: 5 minutes.

TO PICKLE BEET-ROOT.

Boil the beet-root tender by the directions of page 247, and when it is quite cold, pare and slice it; put it into a jar, and cover it with common vinegar previously boiled and allowed to become again perfectly cold: it will soon be ready for use. It is excellent when merely covered with vinegar. A few small onions may be boiled in the pickle for it when their flavour is liked.

To each quart vinegar, salt, 1 teaspoonful; cayenne tied in muslin, $\frac{1}{2}$ saltspoonful, or white peppercorns, $\frac{1}{2}$ to whole oz.

PICKLED ESCHALOTS.

For a quart of ready-peeled eschalots, add to the same quantity of the best pale white-wine vinegar, a dessertspoonful of salt, and an ounce of

whole white pepper; bring these quickly to a boil, take off the scum, throw in the eschalots, simmer them for two minutes only; turn them into a clean stone jar, and when they are quite cold, tie a skin, or two folds of thick paper over it.

Eschalots, 1 quart; vinegar, 1 quart; salt, 1 dessertspoonful; whole white pepper, 1 oz.

Obs.—The sooner the eschalots are pickled after they are ripe and dry, the better they will be.

PICKLED ONIONS.

Take the smallest onions that can be procured, just after they are harvested, for they are never in so good a state for the purpose as then; proceed, after having peeled them, exactly as for the eschalots, and when they begin to look clear, which will be in three or four minutes, put them into jars, and pour the pickle on them. The vinegar should be very pale, and their colour will then be exceedingly well preserved. Any favourite spices can be added to it.

TO PICKLE LEMONS AND LIMES; (*excellent.*)

Wipe eight fine sound lemons very clean, and make, at equal distances, four deep incisions in each, from the stalk to the blossom end, but without dividing the fruit; stuff them with as much salt as they will contain, lay them into a deep dish, and place them in a sunny window, or in some warm place for a week or ten days, keeping them often turned and basted with their own liquor; then rub them with some good pale turmeric, and put them with their juice, into a stone jar with a small head of garlic, divided into cloves and peeled, and a dozen small onions stuck with twice as many cloves. Boil in two quarts of white-wine vinegar, half a pound of ginger lightly bruised, two ounces of whole black pepper, and half a pound of mustard-seed; take them from the fire and pour them directly on the lemons; cover the jar with a plate, and let them remain till the following day, then add to the pickle half a dozen capsicums (red peppers), and tie a skin and a fold of thick paper over the jar.

Large lemons stuffed with salt, 8: 8 to 10 days. Turmeric, 1 to 2 ozs.; ginger, $\frac{1}{2}$ lb.; mustard-seed, $\frac{1}{2}$ lb.; capsicums, 6 ozs.

Obs.—The turmeric and garlic may, we think, be omitted from this pickle with advantage. It will remain good for seven years if the lemons be kept well covered with vinegar; that which is added to them should be boiled and then left till cold before it is poured into the jar. The lemons will not be fit for table in less than twelve months; but if wanted for more immediate use, set them for one night into a cool oven after the bread is drawn; they may then be eaten almost directly.

Limes must have but slight incisions made in the rinds; and they will be sufficiently softened in four or five days. Two ounces of salt only will be required for half a dozen; and all which remains unmelted must, with their juice, be put into the jar with them before the vinegar is poured on: this should be mixed with spice and mustard-seed, and be boiling when it is added to the limes.

TO PICKLE BARBERRIES AND SIBERIAN CRABS.

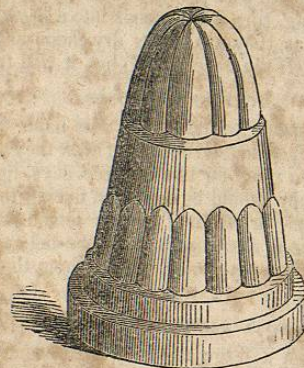
When wanted for garnishing only, take the fruit before it is very ripe, cut half the length of their stalks from the crabs, and free the

barberries from the leaves, and from any discoloured berries that may be amongst them. Put them into stone jars, and cover them well with brine, which has been boiled and left to become perfectly cold. Look at them occasionally during the winter, and should any scum or mould have gathered on the surface, clear it well off, drain the brine closely from the fruit, and fill the jars with some that is freshly made. Six ounces of salt, and a morsel of alum half the size of a bean to the quart of water should be boiled together for ten minutes, and well skimmed, both for the first brine, and for any that may be required afterwards.

To pickle these fruits in vinegar, add the alum to a sufficient quantity to cover them, and boil it with a few white peppercorns, which must be strained out before it is poured into the jars: it must be quite cold when added to the barberries or crabs; these last should not be ripe when they are used, or they will burst in the pickle; they should have attained their growth and full colour, but be still hard.

CHAPTER XXIII.

CAKES.



Modern Cake Mould.

GENERAL REMARKS ON CAKES.

THE ingredients for cakes, as well as for puddings, should all be fresh and good, as well as free from damp; the lightness of many kinds depends entirely on that given to the eggs by whisking, and by the manner in which the whole is mixed. A *small* portion of carbonate of soda, which will not be in the slightest degree perceptible to the taste after the cake is baked, if thrown in just before the mixture is put into the oven, will ensure its rising well.

To guard against the bitterness so often imparted by yeast when it is used for cakes or biscuits, it should be *sparingly* added, and the sponge should be left twice the usual time to rise. This method will be found