



FOOD SAFETY:

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Check Old Cucumber Pickle recipes

If you are considering using your grandmother's old cucumber pickle recipe this year -- take a good look at it. The vinegar used in those old recipes was 7% acidity. This vinegar was much stronger than that which we use in today's recipes.

In looking over old recipes keep these points in mind:

Make sure the vinegar used is at least 5% acidity.

Fresh pack pickle recipes must call for at least equal parts vinegars to water.

Alum or lime is no longer considered necessary to make pickles crispy if you use good quality cucumber and up-to-date procedures. If alum or lime is included, the recipe must have rinsing steps.

Brined pickles must taste tart before being processed.

If the recipe is for fermented or brined pickles salt must be added. Salt plays an important role in the process of changing the cucumber to a pickle. Salt can be omitted in fresh pack pickle recipes. The texture and flavor will be different from regular fresh pack pickles. Again, make sure you use equal parts vinegar to water.

All pickles must be processed in a boiling water bath. Call your local extension office for up-to-date processing times and methods.

This information is specific to cucumber pickles and will not apply to other vegetable pickles. Call the extension office for information on other items.

These are only guidelines and will not ensure the safety of an untested recipe. The only way to gauge the safety of any pickle recipe is by scientific testing. The safest thing to do is to use a USDA approved recipe.

Additional information can be found in PNW0355 "Pickling Vegetables," available at your local WSU Cooperative Extension office or order online at <http://pubs.wsu.edu>.