

PICKLED GREEN TOMATOES

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Follow our complete, step-by-step, recipe, to learn how to make and can these delicious Pickled Green Tomatoes. A tasty addition to just about any meal. Great as a side dish, or on a sandwich. Kind of sweet, kind of tart and tangy. Printable recipe included.

Pickled Green Tomatoes Recipe

If you love a good Bread and Butter Pickle, I'm pretty certain that you'll love our Pickled Sweet Green Tomatoes recipe as well.

In case you haven't seen it, I've got a great recipe for making Bread and Butter Pickles here on Taste of Southern. They actually won First Place in the North Carolina State Fair not long ago. I try to make at least one batch of those every year, and family and friends always look forward to them as gifts.

As for the Pickled Green Tomatoes, well, this is my first attempt at making them, but hopefully it will not be my last. You can follow along with my canning adventure in the photos and recipe below.

I first tasted Pickled Green Tomatoes back in 2015 on a trip to Arkansas. If mama ever made them, I don't have any memories of them.

Not long after crossing from Tennessee into Arkansas, I started seeing billboards from several restaurants that advertised their fried catfish. It seemed to be a big thing out that way.

I love a good fried fish, and have had fried catfish over the years, so I figured I'd look up one of the restaurants from the billboards and enjoy a good meal.

Sadly, I don't recall the name of the restaurant that I eventually ate at, but I do remember the Pickled Green Tomatoes.

I saw them listed on the menu as being served with just about every fish plate they were offering. It was just a special small side dish that accompanied the meal.

The sweet, tangy, taste kind of grabs you at first. But, I found that I really liked them. It just added something to the meal of fried catfish, slaw, and potato salad that I was having.

It kind of cleanses the palate so you can enjoy the next bite of your main dish all over again.

It's taken a couple of years for me to finally get around to making some of my own. You can use them as you would about any type of relish. I think they would go really good on a hot dog or a burger, but since I don't eat hamburgers, I'll just stick to the hot dogs.

The recipe is fairly simple. You do have to wait 4 to 6 hours after you slice and salt the tomatoes and onions, so plan accordingly. It would be a really easy first recipe to try if you're new to pickles and home food preservation. I hope you'll give them a try.

I purchased a half bushel box of green tomatoes over at the Western North Carolina Farmers Market in Asheville, North Carolina on a recent trip through the mountains.

The recipe calls for 10 to 11 pounds of green tomatoes and it made a full 9 pints just as the recipe had stated.

I'm looking forward to entering some of these into both our Regional Fair and our NC State Fair. We'll see what happens. Wish me luck.

So, if you're ready to give them a try, let's get in the kitchen, and... Let's Get Cooking!

Pickled Sweet Green Tomatoes: You'll need these ingredients.

Begin by washing your green tomatoes under cool running water. Gently scrub off any dirt that might be clinging to the tomatoes.

Slice the tomatoes into about 1/4 inch slices.

My OXO Professional Mandoline made this part quick and easy. It also helped me to keep the slices uniform in size.

I've partnered with OXO numerous times here on Taste of Southern. They sent me this Mandoline a short time back to test and review for them. I don't use it often, but when I do, it makes the job quick and easy.

Of course, you can always use a good sharp knife to get the same results.

After I sliced the first tomato on the Mandoline, I decided I would remove the stem end of the tomatoes and then slice them. I don't want that hard section going into my finished product. I could have just sliced off the entire end, but why waste more than you have too... right?

With the tomatoes all sliced, I moved on to the onions. I sliced them into rounds first, then I cut those rounds into halves as pictured above.

Place the sliced tomatoes and onions in a large, non-reactive pot.

Sprinkle the salt all over the top of the tomatoes and onions.

The salt will help pull water out from the tomatoes once it begins to dissolve. I questioned if this small amount would really be enough, but it was what the recipe called for.

I do this same thing when making Bread and Butter Pickles by the way. Turns out, the salt was enough to do the trick.

Let the pot sit out on your counter for four to six hours. It's not necessary to refrigerate it.

After about six hours, I poured the tomatoes and onions into a large colander to drain away the liquid that the salt had helped remove. I did this in a couple of batches since I'm working with a large amount of tomatoes.

Once drained, I placed the tomatoes and onions back into the large pot they had been in.

In a separate pot, add the vinegar.

Don't forget that when you measure out the Brown Sugar, you want to pack it down into your measuring cup. You'll be needing three cups for this recipe.

Add the brown sugar to the vinegar.

Next, place this on your stove top over Medium heat. Stir the mixture as it heats up until the sugar has fully dissolved.

Pour the heated vinegar and sugar over the tomatoes and onions.

Place the pot on your stove top. I used a Medium-High heat, but I made sure to stir it often so the tomatoes didn't stick to the bottom of the pot and burn.

While the mixture begins to heat up, let's make the spice packet that we'll need.

Measure out the needed spices onto a doubled piece of cheesecloth.

That's Mustard Seed (top left), Ground Allspice (top right), Celery Seed (bottom left) and Whole Cloves (bottom right).

Carefully gather the corners, and tie the top of the cheesecloth together to make a packet, like this.

Handle it carefully so you don't shake out all the spices.

Toss the spice packet into your pot with the tomatoes.

Gently stir the tomatoes as they cook. You'll need to bring this mixture up to a boil, then reduce the heat back down to about Medium and let the mixture simmer for 30 minutes.

Again, keep stirring so it doesn't scorch.

While the tomatoes are simmering, and while you're keeping a close eye on them, let's go ahead and wash up those jars.

Wash the jars in hot, soapy water. While you're washing them, carefully run your finger around the top edge of the jar to be sure it's not cracked or chipped. Remove any jar that you might find that is damaged.

Rinse the jars with clear water to remove any soap residue. Set aside for the moment.

Set up your work space so that you have everything at hand once the tomatoes are cooked and ready to be placed in hot jars.

This is how I typically setup my stove for canning.

The back left burner has my lids and bands in warm water. I set the heat to it's lowest setting for the lids and bands. You need to keep them in warm water, but not in boiling water. Boiling water will damage the red rubber sealing edge on the jar lids.

Sources now say that heating up the lids is no longer necessary with the new lids being produced these days. Still, I'm so use to doing it this way, I just keep doing it. It doesn't hurt.

The burner on the back right is a pot that I fill with water and heat up. I use this warm water to add to my canning pot if I don't have enough water to properly cover the jars once they go in.

The pot on the front left is usually the food item I'm going to place in the jars. I had to pull an older photo to show you this setup, so that's not actually my green tomatoes in the pot on the left. But, you get the idea.

The water bath canning pot is on the front right burner. I also use this pot to sterilize my jars first.

I typically place my rinsed jars in the canning pot, then fill it with water, covering the jars by about two inches. This goes on the burner and is brought to a boil. Once boiling, I reduce the heat a bit and let the jars continue at a low boil for at least 15 minutes to sterilize them. After that amount of time, they are ready to be filled.

I let the same water stay in the pot to seal my jars in once they are filled by the way.

There are other methods to sterilize the jars, such as in your dishwasher if it has a sterilize setting. And, some folks place water in the jars and place them in a pan inside the oven to heat them up. The choice is yours, just be sure to follow APPROVED methods for sterilizing your jars to ensure safe canning practices.

With the tomatoes cooked for 30 minutes, it's time to fill the jars.

Move your tomatoes from the stove to your canning work space. Place a funnel inside one of your jars, then use a slotted spoon to add the tomatoes and onion mixture first. Gently pack in enough of the product to fill the jar up to the bottom of the jar rim.

Use a ladle to add enough liquid to bring the contents of the jar up to the proper headspace.

Fill the jars, leaving 1/2 inch headspace.

Headspace, is the amount of space left between the top of the product in the jar to the top of the jar rim itself. Ball Canning makes a great little tool for measuring this. I'm using it here. One end is designed with notches so you can measure the proper spacing for differing amounts of headspace. This recipe calls for leaving 1/2 inch of headspace as mentioned above.

Don't overfill your jars, but don't underfill them either.

Remove any air bubbles.

The other end of the blue headspace tool can be used to remove air bubbles. I like using these wooden skewers, but either will get the job done.

Place the skewer down in the jar, all the way to the bottom, and bob it up and down as you work your way around the edge of the jar, then down in the middle. The concept here is, air bubbles trapped in the bottom, will be released and travel up the skewer to the top where they burst.

You want to remove as many air bubbles as you can, but there's no need to get carried away with it, a few will usually show up somewhere but they will not hurt anything.

Use a damp paper towel or cloth to gently wipe around the top of the jar. This will remove any food particles or sticky syrup that might be on the rim. Cleaning the rim is very important so your jars will get a proper seal when the lid comes into contact with the jar rim.

Use your magnetic wand to remove one of the warm lids from the water on your stove top. Gently shake any water from the lid, then place it onto the top of the jar. As you can see, you don't have to dry the lid completely, a little water isn't going to hurt it.

Shake off any water from the band when you take it out of the water. Make sure everything is centered and begin to snug the band down onto the jar.

You want to only tighten this to the FINGER TIGHT point. That doesn't mean give it all the muscle you've got. Smile. You just need to gently snug the band down onto the jar, a little firm.

Congratulations, your jar is now ready for the water bath canner.

Place the wire rack that holds your jars in your canning pot, using the hooks on the handle to let the rack rest in the loading/unloading position.

Note the crook in the handle. It's made to hook over the top of the pot while you add and remove jars.

Depending on what I'm processing, I will either fill all my jars then load the canner, or I'll go ahead and place each jar in the rack as I finish filling and closing that jar.

With these green tomatoes, I just went ahead and placed each jar in the rack as I went. A little extra time in hot water isn't going to affect them much.

Keep adding jars until you've loaded them all into the rack.

Then, carefully lift the handles of the rack up, and lower the rack into the water.

When the rack is resting on the bottom of the pot, be sure you have enough water in the pot to cover the jars by at least one inch. If you need more water, that warmed up pot of water on the back burner is right there when you need it.

Bring the water in the canning pot back up to a rolling boil. Once the water starts to boil, you can start timing the process needed. You will also need to place a lid on the pot at this time.

Processing times will vary depending on the size of the jars being used, such as half-pints, pints, or quarts. It will also vary depending on the Altitude that you live in. Always consult an approved guide, such as Ball Canning Books, to find the proper amount of time needed to process whatever you're

making.

For me – in this recipe, I'm using pint jars, and the elevation where I live is 358 feet above sea level. There are many sources on the Internet to help you find the elevation where you live.

So, I'll need to process these pint jars for 10 minutes, based on the size of jar and the elevation here.

After 10 minutes, I carefully removed the lid, opening it so the steam would flow out and away from my face. Steam burns can really hurt, so be very careful. You'll also want to make sure that any little ones, or your pets, are not around while you're doing this.

I use tongs to grab the handles of the wire rack and lift it back up out of the water. I hook the handles back on the rim of the canning pot, and just let the jars REST here for about 5 minutes before I attempt to remove them from the canning pot.

You may start to hear that wonderful "PING" sound that all home canners wait so anxiously to hear.

Don't worry about any water on top of your jars. It will eventually evaporate away.

Use your jar lifter to carefully remove the jars from the water bath canning pot.

Try to keep the jars upright, and avoid any temptation to tilt them to the side to pour off any water that may be standing on top.

Place the jars on a folded towel, in a draft free location away from any air conditioning vents.

DO NOT DISTURB FOR TWENTY FOUR HOURS.

Also, avoid the temptation to press down on the center of the lids during this time. You may not hear each and every jar make that "ping" sound, but that doesn't mean it hasn't sealed.

After 24 hours have passed, THEN you can gently press down on the center of the lid to be sure it sealed. If the center pops back up, that jar isn't sealed. Just put it in the refrigerator and use it first.

After 24 hours have passed, gently loosen the band on each jar and place the jar in a cool and dry location for storage. Be sure not to sit anything on top of them, and don't sit one jar on top of another.

We loosen the bands so that if the jar isn't properly sealed, the lid will be able to rise up and let you know it's gone bad. Same for not having anything sitting on top of the jar. It needs room to expand if it goes bad. If that should happen, you need to throw the contents away... it's spoiled.

Pickled Green Tomatoes should easily keep for a year if not longer if properly stored.

Enjoy.

Please keep in mind that I have endeavored to show you as much of the making and water bath canning process for preserving these Pickled Green Tomatoes as possible.

If you are new to canning, be sure to watch a good number of the Extension Office videos that are available on the Internet to gain more knowledge of the process before starting. Also be sure that you only follow approved recipes when doing any type of home food preservation.

Home canning can be fun, easy, and a great way to store some of your harvest for the months ahead. As long as you follow safe practices, you should be fine and worry free. Not following the proper methods could cause some serious problems with your canning projects. And, we don't want that to happen.

I used the recipe found in the USDA Complete Guide to Home Canning. It's available from the National Institute of Food and Agriculture.

Many of the recipes for my home canning projects also come from the Ball Blue Book to Home Preserving, available online and at many stores that carry canning supplies.

Don't be afraid to give home food preservation a try. It's much easier than you might think, and something you'll be proud to share with family and friends.

I look forward to hearing about your canning adventures in the Comment section below.