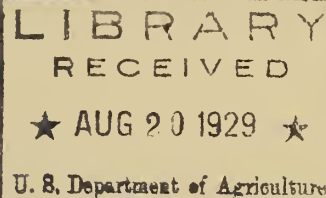


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THE HOUSEHOLD CALENDAR.



An interview between Mrs. Rowena Schmidt Carpenter and Dr. Louise Stanley, Bureau of Home Economics, through WRS and 30 other stations associated with the National Broadcasting Company, at 11:35 p. m., E. S. T. Friday, August 9, 1929.

Mrs. Carpenter: How do you do, Homemakers! I want to thank you for your letters about our canning interview and the hot weather meal suggestions. It is nice to hear from some of you who are tuning in regularly.

We are beginning to have questions on picklemaking in the Bureau now. Since many of you may be starting your plans for pickling, I thought this was a good time to answer some of the letters over the air, so Dr. Stanley has come with me again today.

The first letter I would like for you to answer, Dr. Stanley, is from a homemaker who asks especially about the brining of vegetables in picklemaking. Is there more than one method and what are the advantages of brining?

Dr. Stanley: Brining is one means of drawing water from vegetables. The vegetables used in pickles contain a very large amount of water; in fact about 90%. Much of this water must be removed so that it will not dilute the pickling liquid. There are two brining methods in common use. One is the weak brine method that encourages slight fermentation and the formation of lactic acid. For this a weak brine of definite proportions is used. Sauer kraut and dill pickles are made by the weak brine method. It is desirable to add a small amount of vinegar to prevent the growth of spoilage bacteria during the fermentation. Vegetables put down in weak brine require careful watching, but this method develops more flavor and it is not necessary to soak out any salt when the brining is finished. --- The other method uses a stronger brine, acts as a preservative, and promotes certain texture changes. Vegetables can be left in the strong brine a longer time, and they do not require such careful watching. This is the simplest and most usual method. The heavily brined vegetables must have some of the salt drawn out by fresh water or weak vinegar before they are made up into pickles. Directions for brining are given in F.B. 1458, "Making Fermented Pickles", which can be sent free.

Mrs. C. Is brining necessary, Dr. Stanley? We often have requests for recipes for making pickles from fresh vegetables. How should these be answered?

Dr. S. We must simply say, Mrs. C., that we have found by repeated experiments that the preliminary brining is essential in whole vegetable pickles, whether they are to be sweet or sour when finished. Of course chopped vegetables may be made into pickles without previous brining. The fresh chopped vegetable is allowed to stand overnight with a small amount of dry salt which begins to draw out the water. The next day the chopped vegetable is put in a cloth and squeezed to remove some of the water before the pickling liquid is added. The so-called "bread and butter" pickles are often made this way. However, we have found in the Bureau that better chopped pickles and relishes are made from vegetables that have been previously brined.



Mrs. C. And aren't there certain advantages in putting vegetables down in brine, other than the quality of the chopped pickles, Dr. Stanley?

Dr. S. Yes, it is often very convenient to brine onions, cauliflower, green peppers, green tomatoes and beans when they are plentiful, and then work them up into various pickle mixtures later in the season. In this case the vegetables are prepared by the "long brine method," and so they may have to be freshened in clear water or weak vinegar to remove part of the salt before they are put into the spiced vinegar.

Mrs. C. Before we get away from the subject of whole pickles, Dr. Stanley, I would like to have you answer a letter from a homemaker in Colorado who had 12 gallons of sweet, spiced whole cucumber pickles spoil last year. Some puffed up and burst, and some shriveled. She wants to know why.

Dr. S. It is a little difficult, Mrs. Carpenter, to be sure what caused the trouble without knowing all about the method our Colorado friend used. The swelling and bursting must have been the result of gas formation inside of the cucumbers, probably because they were large, overripe, and hollow, and because gas forming bacteria were present. Only freshly picked cucumbers should be brined. They should be just under-ripe, firm, and of a uniform size not too large.-- Shriveling of sweet pickles is caused by putting them in too strong a pickling solution when they are removed from the brine. A concentrated syrup draws the moisture from the cucumbers so quickly that it breaks down the cell walls, and the pickles become limp and withered. We will send this homemaker the bulletin on making fermented pickles, and our own special recipes for preparing various spiced pickles. If she follows our directions carefully, I feel sure she will not have these difficulties again.

Mrs. C. Do you recommend sealing whole sweet pickles in air-tight containers, Dr. Stanley? In the case we have just been discussing, the whole spiced cucumber pickles were stored in earthenware jars with loose fitting lids. Might that cause spoilage?

Dr. S. Yes, unless the spiced vinegar is very strong and sweet. Ideally, the pickling solution would be sufficiently concentrated to preserve the material to which it is added, and processing in the jars should be an unnecessary precaution. Usually all that is necessary is to seal them in air-tight containers, or, if they are not sealed, to cover them with a layer of paraffin. In some cases, however, we have had difficulty, you may remember, where the store-room is too hot. In those cases it is wise to heat the solution to boiling, pour over the pickles, and then seal air-tight, using the usual glass jar. - - - You remember, Mrs. Carpenter, that we are still working with the recipe of the sweet spiced dill pickle, trying to get a syrup of good flavor and still concentrated enough to keep the pickles without sealing.

Mrs. C. Oh yes! Dr. Stanley, I think you should tell our listeners more about those sweet dill pickles since so many of our Bureau friends think them so delicious. You remember the Congressman!

Dr. S. All right, Mrs. Carpenter. I shan't tell the Congressman's name, but perhaps his wife is listening and will recognize the story. He was visiting the Bureau when we were working with this recipe, and he sampled the pickles, and liked them. Immediately he wanted many copies of the recipe to send to his constituents, but he went even farther than that: He took the recipe and went home to make the pickles himself! The first step is the same as for making any dill pickles. Anyone can make dill pickles if care is taken, or can buy commercially dilled pickles and then spice them. It is very important that they are firm and crisp. The whole pickles are sliced when they come from the dilled brine, and are then put in a very sweet, spiced vinegar mixture, made according to the directions we can send.

Mrs. C. Yes, we hope that any of you who have tuned in this morning will feel free to write for our pickle recipes. - - - - So far, Dr. Stanley we have talked only about vegetable pickles, but we frequently have questions about pickled fruits: sweet pickled peaches, pickled cherries, and watermelon rind pickle. I know that we do not recommend brining these fruits; the fresh fruit is worked up into pickle. But what about sealing? Are sweet pickled fruits stored in stone jars or sealed in air-tight containers?

Dr. S. We recommend sealing even these pickles, though sweet spiced whole peaches may be stored in stone jars with loose fitting lids if the pickling syrup is sufficiently concentrated and completely covers the fruit. We have found in our work in the Bureau that a pickling syrup using about half as much sugar as vinegar is a little more pleasing to most people than the sweeter ones suggested in many recipe books. This more dilute syrup emphasizes the flavor of the fruit, but it is not concentrated enough to keep the pickles without sealing. Our recipes for sweet pickles can be sent in answer to these questions. It might be wise to emphasize here, Mrs. Carpenter, that no recipes are infallible. It is difficult to always get vinegar of the same strength; and spices, too, vary in strength. Pickling mixtures should be checked by tasting to see that the flavor is adapted to the tastes of the maker and her family.

Mrs. C. And now, Dr. Stanley, comes a question about sauer kraut, from a homemaker who has read about sauer kraut cocktail and other sauer kraut dishes as healthful additions to the meal. She wants to know if we can send household directions for making her cabbage patch into some barrels of sauer kraut for the winter.

Dr. S. Very easy to answer, Mrs. Carpenter, since such directions are given in full in the bulletin on making fermented pickles. The bulletin does recommend 4 or 6 gallon stone jars for home use rather than large barrels except in cases where very large quantities are used.

Mrs. C. Thank you so much Dr. Stanley for coming with me today to help solve some of the problems of picklemaking that are timely just now. And now we bid our friends on the air goodbye until next Thursday.

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