

Pickles to Relish

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By
Beverly Ellen Schoonmaker Alfeld

Foreword by Ron Couch

Photography by Jim Smith



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*This cookbook is dedicated to my mother, Doris P. Schoonmaker,
who has always been supportive of my work and my adventures.*



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Foreword

Pickles and relish and, indeed, the cucumbers from which many such things are made often conjure memories of picnics and cookouts. But of course over the centuries pickled items of all kinds have been featured at the most formal tables of royalty, as well as being set out as fancy side dishes for the rich and famous. Fact is, folks around the world would enjoy far poorer diets were it not for the plethora of delightful things produced in the age-old pursuit of pickling and fermenting.

And Bev Alfeld certainly pursues the best in any culinary endeavor, not the least of which is perhaps her forte, pickling and preserving. In short, she is an expert. If readers of *Pickles to Relish* have enjoyed her earlier successful work, *The Jamlady Cookbook*, they will know that in her latest effort little of value or interest in the art of pickling has escaped the attention of Bev or the Jamlady. She thinks big; when she takes on anything, especially in the culinary field, she can be counted on to research it in depth.

As extensive as the information presented in *Pickles to Relish* is, you will find it fully accessible to both chef and home canner. This is because Jamlady and Bev Alfeld believe canning is more than food preservation, a tenet certainly evidenced by this book; it is useful to youngsters as well as adults because it teaches application of math and history and pride in self-sufficiency. Illustrating accessibility even to neophytes is the book's how-to for making small batches of pickles without canning—you can put them in the refrigerator or leave them out to develop at room temperature.

Of special note are the more technical aspects of *Pickles to Relish*. Although a bit complex for novice canners, the Alfeld Notation System still alerts them to the importance of processing times and altitude considerations. There is an excellent discussion of relative acidity and a pH chart in the back of the book.

Few cookbooks offer so many recipes for chutneys, or such a diversity of pickle and relish recipes, from mild to wild—like pickled green walnuts to top filet mignon, pickled kumquats in champagne or pickled dilly beans and asparagus in a Bloody Mary.

Ron Couch





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Finally, thank you Jamlady for allowing me to write some of this book by myself. Not everyone appreciates you all the time, but I do. For those who don't believe in Tinker Bell, Jamlady is hard to explain. Jamlady, like Betty Crocker, is the ideal cook and canner, although Bev Alfeld influences Jamlady and visa versa. Bev Alfeld hears Jamlady's little voice above her shoulder when she cooks. Maybe you have a little voice that talks to you, but perhaps your Tinker Bell does not know how to cook and talk. Jamlady does.



Three jars of jardinière.



Introduction

Pickles to Relish provides information on food preservation for the homemaker, canner, gardener, professional chef, food scientist, doctor, artist, pickler, chemist, farmer, nurse, nutritionist, food historian, anthropologist, ethnobotanist, backyard-grill master, and anyone else who is interested in condiments, cooking, self-sufficiency, food history, education, art, new experiences, and healthful food. Various types of food-preservation techniques or methods, such as fermentation, curing, pickling, freezing, refrigeration, and canning, are discussed, along with related information from allied fields of knowledge. See how various techniques of food preservation have impacted, and continue to impact, human survival, security, and advancement. Learn how to get “pickle power.” Learn about balancing your own potential and roots.

Some of the multiple-subject, or cross-cat, information in *Pickles to Relish* isn't generally found in one book as our educational system, in general, tends to promote a single-subject mind-set. **School courses tend to divide information by fields, and many students don't think very deeply about food as it relates to nation building or feeding two billion hungry people via old-fashioned techniques such as fermentation.**

Pickling and canning! “Why do we need them? Can't we just buy food at the grocery store?” Artists, the creatively intelligent lot, are often seen as less learned or unqualified. What does an artist know about scientific, mathematical, or historical issues? **So many creative solutions are unrealized because the unique intelligence of one group or another is underrated, unrecognized, and underutilized.**

This title, *Pickles to Relish*, demonstrates the double meaning and intent of this book. While you read or use a recipe from this book, consider the historic, economic, artistic, and self-survival importance associated with something so basic as fermentation and food preservation. Has its impact and importance changed over time? How does a nation's collective philosophy of life affect its food choices and its food supply, and visa versa? **Are the pickling skills needed for pickling food being advanced or are they being slowly lost?** If they are being lost, what should we do about it? What values and knowledge are we losing, if any, as we attempt to relegate this homemaker's art to a position of “slow food” or relative obscurity? Should we rely on distant farms and factories to supply us with modified and cloned food? If properly applied, could pickling and fermentation knowledge be saving and enriching many lives? **Are we trying to use high-tech solutions to solve problems of the low-tech, third-world nations or of the low-tech home kitchen?** What might happen

if we used more simplistic preservation methods in these places? How many lives might be saved or greatly improved at a relatively low cost per person? Do we educate people to eat for less cost while improving their nutrition or visa versa.

***Pickles to Relish* is more than a cookbook or recipe book. This book seeks to teach people to thrive by applying the various concepts of cooking, chemistry, art, horticulture, and historical knowledge to their everyday lives.** It seeks to teach people to modify and improve facets of their own lives. **Jamlady espouses a philosophy of balance.** It attempts to help people to be proud of their accomplishments. Jamlady and Bev Alfeld believe more local food sources should be developed, and more people need to pay attention to what they are eating. To this end, people need to slow down some and teach their children with hands-on activities so the allied knowledge children are learning in school is supported by meaningful, real-life, home experiences with nurturing adults. Educate yourself about food. Don't just purchase anything on the grocery store shelf, because it is there and, therefore, "must be okay to eat." Take control of your own life. Live a fuller, healthier, and happier life with self-acquired knowledge and increased self-sufficiency. Urge governments around the world to fund more programs that teach methods of fermentation, seed selection, and food preservation.

Support cooks, artists, scientists, and culinologists™ who seek to create more exciting foods, foods that are more interesting and healthful than ever. **This new field of culinology™, besides being the official magazine of the RCA (Research Chefs Association), is a new subject, field, and college major, which blends the fields of food science and culinary arts.** This blending and study of the blending of these two fields of knowledge are long overdue. Previously, simplistic and arbitrary lines of subject demarcation were beginning to restrict advances in both fields. Besides culinology™, the new field of ethnobotany has emerged. Ethnobotany studies the interrelatedness of cultures and their uses for plants. **One might see this information sharing as a swing of the pendulum back in time while also eyeing the future, as we grasp new theories like ECIWO**

and the fermentation of our vitamins and medicines into our foods.

Within this cookbook are five chapters containing recipes and information on food history, process, chemistry, horticulture, spices, and philosophy. There are recipes for pickles, relishes, sauces, juices, and chutneys. Please refer to the table of contents and index for more information concerning the topics and recipes presented in this cookbook.

This publication hopes to spark your creative spirit and show you how much there is to learn and gain from just making a jar of pickles, relish, or chutney. I have not made every type of pickle in the world, but I have made many different pickles for farmers' markets, recipes easily duplicated by any dauntless reader. If you have fears about canning, read *Pickles to Relish* and overcome them. **If you have children, set the example of self-sufficiency and quell their fear. Can! Freeze! Make fresh, raw pickles! If you are a gardener, chef, scientist, doctor, nurse, or artist, make use of your special talents and bountiful garden by sharing the results of your applied philosophical and scientific knowledge as you hand out "jars of love."**

To pickle is to preserve a vegetable, fruit, or meat in an acid. Many dictionaries and other sources confuse people about pickling or fermentation. These sources imply vinegar or a brine solution must always be added to a vegetable to make a pickle. **Actually, a dry-salted vegetable, like a cucumber, will give up its own water via osmosis. This action triggers the fermentation process of lactic bacteria. The resulting acid preserves the vegetable and inhibits the growth of harmful bacteria.** This process is complex and has not been studied adequately for all types of pickles. **In some recipes an acid, like vinegar, is added to the vegetable, and it is then pasteurized to kill or make dormant the bacterial spores that may be harmful. The third method of preservation requires acidification of the vegetable or fruit combined with refrigeration.** The acid and the low temperature keep any harmful bacteria dormant. **Sometimes, lemons or limes are used instead of vinegar.** For example, *ceviche* (raw, pickled fish) may be made with lime juice instead of vinegar.

Water, wine, sugar, salt, or other spices might be part of a pickling solution, and it is possible to make a less-vinegary pickle by increasing the salt and water and decreasing the vinegar. When hermetically sealing a pickled product, the acidity, or pH, must always be considered. **It is also important to consider the quantity of salt and sugar in any product.** Do not alter pickling recipes unless you use a pH meter to check the ground-up product. **Make sure the pH of any rolling-water-bath-processed pickle is well under 4.6.**

This cookbook attempts to teach canning and pickling from a multi-sensory, philosophical, and multi-disciplinary point-of-view. Educational researchers and other psychologists tell us students learn better when the learning is meaningful and multi-sensory, yet instruction in many schools is still predominately by lecture or paper and pencil. **Present day students have sensory preferences: visual—46 percent, kinesthetic-tactile—35 percent, and auditory—19 percent** (Sousa 1997 and Swanson 1995). If one looks back, one sees “old-time” educators and individual family members teaching students with visual and kinesthetic-tactile methods. Such is the nature of everyone “pitching in.” There was farm work to do, and everybody was working and talking with one another. There was more adult-child interaction and probably less isolated and unmonitored child-to-child interaction. Consider teaching a child how to milk a cow, curry a horse, or collect, clean, and count eggs. I don’t think they often wrote out the instructions for the child to read or spoke all the instructions. Instead, it was, **“Watch me! Now, you do this.”**

Consider home economics classes where the students had to measure, compute, prepare ingredients, and cook food. **Students would learn and then duplicate recipes for their own families.** Cooking opportunities were available at church, 4-H, and grandma’s house. All the cooking skills were practiced—reading, measuring, temperature-setting, attending, and accountability. **Repetition of steps and putting information into short-term memory eventually allows information to be saved in long-term memory.** Learning was taking place. The same analysis could be applied to other self-sufficiency

activities, such as building furniture or sewing a dress. **Information placed in long-term storage was then available for future examination and use.** The continued expansion of learning or higher-ordered learning could take place only when there was learned information available, which might be synthesized with the new information. **Over-learning was a good thing; revisiting learned information usually meant this information was being synthesized with new knowledge.**

In years past, there were fewer lines of demarcation for different subjects. Multi-disciplinary and multi-sensory learning was encouraged. Just look at an old dime book, and see all the allied areas of knowledge discussed within those little books. With all the new research about how we learn, it seems prudent to begin to use more hands-on instruction and instruction with meaningful and delicious results. **Making a pickle involves much more than just cooking. Pickling involves an understanding of horticulture, chemistry, cooking, cultural information, mathematics, art, and, sometimes, governmental regulations. But of course, if you insist, you can gleefully use this book as a “copy book.” Just follow the recipes, and try to ignore the many encouragements for individual research and development. However, it probably won’t work. That would be like eating only one chocolate-covered cherry from a box of twenty-four.**

Some will say pickling and canning take too much time and are slow. **The process of pickling can be either fast or slow, depending on the recipe. Keep in mind, the slowness of the art is not necessarily a negative, and making a pickle may not be the only objective. What some see as work, may be play to others. Learning is taking place as the process unfolds. Creative and analytic brain activity is spurred onward by the would-be inventor of a new flavor or kind of pickle. To create a new pickle, one draws on previous knowledge and manipulates the variables.** That is what learning is: the process of acquiring and retaining knowledge for future application.

So many cookbooks and recipe books are intended to be “copy books.” Copy the recipe and

don't think about it. It is easy and fast that way. Production is the main focus. Of course, first, one must do and copy to acquire and retain knowledge. Jamlady recommends you think a little bit more about your roots and how you can invent and apply these new ideas. Spend some downtime with yourself and your family. "Fast" should not always be the primary objective. **A "true cook" masters the techniques and underlying principals, so they have a toolbox of information to manipulate and synthesize with new information—sometimes from a most unexpected and inspirational source.** A learned, well-paced cook acquires knowledge, retains it, applies it in the future, and furthers family well-being, knowledge, and happiness in one fell swoop. Fast cooks produce food fast without necessarily meeting all of the objectives cited here. **The knowledge acquired is not just culinary in nature but is knowledge drawn from many allied fields of scholarship.**

Today's news is all about "fast food" and "slow food." The two philosophical schools discuss various food issues, back and forth. As with all things, a balance of both philosophies makes the most sense.

In the 1970s, there were classes in which professors required students to keep track of every minute they spent during the day and night, observing and maximizing their use of time. While time efficiency sounds good and aspiring, some professors failed to consider the consequences for a student who might actually carry out this experiment—to the max. The human body is not a machine and is not intended to run continually at full potential. The havoc such perfected self-discipline can create with the human nervous system can be gradual and harmful. Studies of assembly-line workers who work without adequate breaks, in dim light, and without changes from certain repetitive motions show that these actions can dramatically and negatively affect their bodies. Carpal tunnel is one possible problem. **The human body needs breaks, balance, and a variety of activities.** How similar is this scenario to some classrooms where the students sit at desks, writing all day long? The go-go person who has no balance to his daily routine often develops all sorts of health problems. So, one should

consider the actual outcome of a lifestyle based on fast, faster, and fastest. Where are we headed? **Maybe we go faster and faster but, ultimately, are we sentenced with a shorter life span, lower test scores, and less happy families?** Look what is happening in Japan. Japanese seniors once could boast of the longest life span of any major peoples in the world, but their records may not stand the test of time if their pace of life continues to escalate as they grow fatter and fatter on Western food.

Change pace. Try to accomplish something new. Grow a garden. Watch what you eat. Can or refrigerate some raw pickles. Grow and eat unusual or heritage vegetables. **Be concerned about untested genetic engineering of seeds, especially "suicide seeds"** (genetically-engineered plants that produce seeds that cannot germinate). Understand the dangers and relevancies of these new technologies. Teach your children how to be frugal and self-sufficient. One day they may need or want to use these skills. Insist on schools teaching to an individual's needs as well as teaching to support the government's needs of its citizens. Support local farmers. **Teach your children by example; integrate their everyday learning with functional projects and fun cooking.** Don't miss an opportunity to count telephone poles on the way to grandma's cucumber patch.

There probably isn't a better place to teach yourself or your children about the world, plants, different cultures, math, and the basics of reading than through art and cooking. Yet, what are the first subjects cut in an austere school budget? Do school board members listen to the saying—"Art is Basic?" Art and cooking are basic. These subjects allow students to practice new information in an exciting way, permitting feedback to come from many sources and students to apply their newly acquired knowledge in all sorts of situations with less and less help from others. Indeed, the practice and learning strategies become self-regulated, more executive in nature, and allow students to more easily recall information; they have practiced this information thoroughly and in a multi-sensory fashion. For doing a good job while combining math, science, and culinary information



Dr. Paul Pechman's entries at the 2006 International Pickle Festival, Rosendale, New York. Left to right: Dr. Paul Pechman's "Mango-Mango" (a quick pickle, a mangoed zucchini, or hollowed zucchini, which is stuffed [mangoed] with black-radish and tropical-mango pieces), canned dilly beans, and a quick pickle made with halved tindora cucumbers.

the reward is intrinsic. **Further, if measurements or calculations are incorrect, the cook may end up creating a new, wonderful product or may experience utter failure.**

Since risk is inherent in the cooking, one is more apt to pay close attention and to focus on the steps towards the goal. If a student cook has spent time and money making a pickle or relish and fails because of a calculation error, you can be sure he will pay more attention the next time and recheck his math. Hopefully, he won't give up altogether. So, there are built-in rewards and consequences. Students are more likely to be on task, concentrating and seeking the best possible outcome if their calculations will actually be used in cooking than if they are just doing mathematical-word problems on paper. **There is more motivation. The end product is eaten and accolades are garnered from those who love the food. Additionally, the importance of positive self statements cannot be**

underestimated. As a teacher or parent, it is a whole lot easier to convince children they can measure out or double a recipe than to convince them they can do math with paper and pencil. **The motivation to try harder, begins with little, fun-filled successes.**

Some critics say children are "too young to cook." "They are too young to count; they will be burned." Many pickles and flavored vinegars can be made with little danger to small children. Adults may have to do one or two steps, but children, with little fingers, can efficiently pack pickle jars with green beans or cucumbers. "How many green beans did you put in that pickle jar?" "Make the jar one-third pepper strips." "How beautifully you have packed those alternating layers of sweet red peppers slices and green bean pieces." Some people may not believe this, but most infants as young as one can learn to add and subtract. Babies can be taught to count with carrot sticks in a bucket, cookies in a

bowl, or Cheerios® in a cup. **Given this fact, young children can learn to measure and cook.**

Other benefits of learning through recipes are: they come in increasing degrees of difficulty, have clear expectations, usually are expressed in short sentences and simple vocabulary, and provide feedback from hungry taste-testers. This is a formula for success, a formula that allows students of any age to increase their own self-esteem. Since I work as an advocate and educational consultant for special education students, as well as a chef, I take the opportunity to point out that ADHD students and hyperactive students learn much better with activities allowing them some range of movement, activities with a degree of relevancy. You won't hear students saying, "Why do we have to learn what two cups plus three cups equals?" They can see why it is necessary.

There is also a good likelihood students will go home, get some friends together, and teach them what they have learned. How often does that happen with a paper and pencil assignment? There is even a greater likelihood students will complete the project and look forward to the next one. **While these types of projects may not be as "fast" as some assignments, it is very probable the information from this "slow" or "slower" activity will get logged into their long-term memory.**

So teach yourself to make a few jars of pickles, relishes, and chutneys, or make some "quickles." Start a family tradition if you don't already have an Aunt Tillie who makes hot dilly beans. But, most of all, teach your children the love of learning. Teach them to study about other cultures, religions, traditions, and beliefs that are so intertwined with cooking, pickling, and a meaningful life.