

SPICED-CARROT ICE BOX PICKLES

Courtesy of Sherri Brooks Vinton,
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Because it relies on refrigeration rather than perfect processing to retard bacterial growth, this is a great recipe for first-time canners.
—Sherri Brooks Vinton

- 1½ cups water
- 1 cup white vinegar
- ¼ cup sugar
- 4–6 cloves garlic, sliced
- 2 hot jalapeño peppers sliced, with seeds (make sure to check your peppers for heat—their potency varies widely)
- 1½ tablespoons salt
- 1 pound baby carrots (actual little, young carrots, not the bagged nubs in the grocery store) or large carrots cut into ½ inch sticks

Place all ingredients, except carrots, in a medium saucepan and bring to a boil. Add carrots and remove from heat. Allow to cool, then pack carrots in clean glass canning jars. Pour pickling liquid over top and chill, covered for at least two days and up to one month.

FREEZING

Freezing is a fast, modern way to preserve the summer harvest. Many items benefit from a quick blanch before freezing, which deactivates some of the enzymes that can cause deterioration. Boil vegetables such as asparagus, green beans, broccoli, and peas for one to two minutes, then plunge them into a large bowl of ice and water to stop the cooking process. Dry thoroughly and freeze in bags or airtight containers for four to six months.

Berries, cherries, even tomatoes, can be frozen without blanching. Arrange on a cookie sheet in a single layer and freeze. When frozen, transfer to freezer bags, push out as much air as possible, seal, and return to freezer. (Skins will slip off frozen tomatoes easily as they begin to thaw or when briefly run under warm water.)

DRYING AND DEHYDRATING

Dehydrated foods are light and take up little space, two points for easy storage. Herbs and hot peppers can be air-dried, just hang in a well-ventilated, dry room (attics are great) until brittle. Foods that contain a lot of water, such as apples, berries, and tomatoes, can also be air-dried but need the help of a fan, dehydrator, or low-heat drying in your oven to ensure steady air circulation and dependable results.

ROOT CELLARING

Many fruits and vegetables, such as apples, roots and tubers, onions, garlic, and squashes will keep for months if stored properly. A cool place under the porch or in the garage, a closed-off section of the basement, even a corner of the refrigerator can serve as a place to squirrel away these goodies in the wintertime. Ask your grower for tips on long-term storage or check out the list of resources below for more information.

CANNING

Home canning gives a lot of eaters the willies, but it needn't be intimidating or dangerous. The basic process—called the boiling water method—uses equipment you probably already have in your kitchen or can easily and affordably acquire at the local hardware store. As with baking, it's important to follow a recipe to get good results. Playing fast and loose with the ingredient list can make the difference between a year's worth of pantry supplies and a science experiment gone terribly wrong. This is also one instance where you do not want to use your grandmother's recipe, since practices and formulas have been updated in recent decades to guarantee flavor and quality.

Here are a few reliable resources with great tasting recipes. The techniques range from quick and easy time-savers to more complex projects, so there's something here for everyone who wants to enjoy an endless summer. 🍷

Preserving Summer's Bounty, edited by Susan McClure, Rodale Press, 1998

Ball Complete Book of Home Preserving, edited by Judi Kingry and Lauren Devine, Robert Rose, 2006

Putting Food By, Janet Greene, Plume, 1992