Home-Made Pickled Fish

Many of us have turned up our noses when there is mention of pickled fish. Probably we have encountered sam les of this delicacy which have been rubbery and tough, tasted strong and bitter. I have experimented with pickling brines and have found one that lets the fish stay flaky and tender. Follow this recipe and the fish will not become bitter or sour.

2 cups water  
1 quart vinegar (4 cups)  
2 tablespoons sugar  
2 tablespoons salt  
1 teaspoon whole white pepper  
1 teaspoon whole black pepper  
2 cups onion rings  
2 cups sliced celery

1 teaspoon red hot peppers  
1 teaspoon leaf thyme  
1 teaspoon whole allspice  
1 teaspoon juniper berries  
3 crushed bay leaves  
1 tablespoon sweet marjoram  
6 pounds fish - trout is best  
Small pieces of trimming may be used

Add the above spices to the vinegar and sugar. After the fish has been washed and cleaned it should be soaked in salt water (1 cup per gallon) for six hours. Then it should be placed in the boiling pickle brine and heated until it comes to a boil, then simmered slowly for 5 minutes. The fish should be kept in a tightly sealed container for at least 24 hours, under good refrigeration.

Vinegars Help Control Herb Flavors

If herb seasoning is hard to control by using fresh or dried herbs, use herb flavored vinegars, such as garlic, tarragon, or malt vinegar.

There are several shades or color of vinegar -- white, brown, and dark. In pickling you should use white vinegar, if you want the fruit to keep its original color.

The pickling syrup should contain spices, sugar, water and vinegar. The spices should be tied in a cheese cloth and all brought to a boil -- no more cooking until fruit is added and then the spice bag should be removed.

Pickling Syrup

6 pounds sugar  
1 quart white cider vinegar  
4 sticks of cinnamon

½ tablespoon whole cloves  
1 tablespoon whole allspice

Bring syrup to a boil. Add a few peeled peaches at a time. Cook until tender enough to pierce easily with a toothpick. When finished cooking, put in clean jars. Cover with the syrup up to 1/2 inch of top of jar. Let stand overnight. The next day put the jars in a water vat. Heat to 180°F. for 20 minutes. Seal. Wash jars and put away.

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