

pickles

In cooking school, students are taught there are five cooking techniques: sautéing, frying, dry methods like roasting, wet methods like steaming or boiling, and combination methods like braising. At least that's the French perspective on things. I consider pickling to be a sixth technique that anyone who spends any time in the kitchen should be comfortable with. Seriously. At Momofuku, we serve pickles as a course on their own and use them as garnishes or as ingredients in many of our dishes.

Pickling is practical and doesn't need to be complicated. Lots of cooks equate pickling with canning (which is simple but time-consuming), but pickling can be as easy as making a brine, pouring it over chopped vegetables packed into a container, and waiting the right amount of time to eat them. You can do that, right? Sometimes it's even easier: the salt pickles barely require a recipe. And although kimchi is one of the more involved pickling processes, if you reduce it to its basic steps—salt the vegetable, mix up a spicy marinade to soak it in, and wait a week or two—it's not difficult.

You know how you see scallops at the fish market and think to yourself, I could sauté those with butter? Or see steaks at the butcher and think about throwing them on the grill? When I'm at the farmers' market, I see bushels and baskets of potential pickles: cauliflower, radishes, cucumbers, fennel. Almost anything. There are fewer vegetables and fruits that don't take to pickling than those that do, so get pickling. Now. As soon as you do, you'll wonder what took you so long.



quick salt pickles

A recipe almost seems excessive for these types of quickly made salt-and-sugar pickles, because the technique for making them is so simple: Sprinkle some thinly sliced vegetables with a 3:1 mix of sugar to kosher salt and toss. Ten to 20 minutes later, they're ready to eat. The resulting pickles have a fresh snap.

quick salt pickles, master recipe

MAKES ABOUT 2 CUPS

Halve or double the recipe as needed.

1. Combine the vegetable with the sugar and salt in a small mixing bowl and toss to coat with the sugar and salt. Let sit for 5 to 10 minutes.
2. Taste: if the pickles are too sweet or too salty, put them into a colander, rinse off the seasoning, and dry in a kitchen towel. Taste again and add more sugar or salt as needed. Serve after 5 to 10 minutes, or refrigerate for up to 4 hours.

Vegetable, prepared as indicated

1 tablespoon sugar, or more to taste

1 teaspoon kosher salt, or more to taste

quick-pickled cucumbers: 2 meaty Kirby cucumbers, cut into 1/8-inch-thick disks.

quick-pickled radishes: 1 bunch radishes (breakfast radishes, icicle radishes, and the like), well scrubbed and cut into thin wedges through the root end.

quick-pickled daikon: 1 large or 3 small daikon radishes, peeled and cut into very, very thin slices.