

Tomato Ketchup

This ketchup is not as thick as the bought stuff and is lighter in colour, as only natural ingredients are used.

You need:

500g tomatoes, halved; 1 large onion, peeled and chopped; 1 clove of garlic, chopped; ½ tsp coriander seeds; 1 clove; pinch of chilli powder or chilli flakes (depending on strength); glug of olive oil; ½ tsp ginger powder or chopped fresh ginger; ½ eating apple, peeled and chopped; 100ml cider vinegar; 1 tbsp light brown sugar; 1 tsp sea salt (to taste at the end); Good tomato puree (optional)

Method:

1. Put onion, garlic and apple in a pan with a glug of olive oil and cook until soft. Don't allow to burn.
2. Add tomatoes and cover just to the top of the tomatoes, with water.
3. Add salt, clove, ginger, chilli and coriander.
4. Bring to the boil, then simmer until reduced by half. This should take about 40 minutes or so.
5. Add the vinegar and sugar and simmer for another 10 to 15 minutes, until thicker and less liquid.
6. Pass through a sieve and into a bowl, coaxing it with the back of a wooden spoon. You will be left with tomato pulp in the sieve. Keep this and add it to a pasta sauce, cottage pie or bolognaise.
7. Do a taste check, then if very runny, put back onto the heat to reduce a little more. Or add some puree to help thicken.
8. Bottle and label. This will last in the fridge for a few weeks.

NB. Always ensure that bottles are thoroughly clean and sterilised. May yield a couple of sauce bottles, but it does reduce during the process.

Good to dip your chips into, or on a burger of choice.

Mango Chutney

Very easy to make, once you have prepared your ingredients.

You need: 1.35 kg (3lb) green mangoes, peeled, halved and stoned, then cut into small pieces; 75g (3oz) salt; 2 litres (3 ½ pints) water; 450g (1lb) sugar; 600ml (1 pint) malt vinegar; 75g (3oz) fresh root ginger, peeled and chopped, or half a teaspoon ground ginger; 6 cloves garlic, crushed; 2 tsp hot chilli powder- (be warned; some are extremely hot, so know your chillis!). Use only ½ tsp if it is very hot. You can always add some more at the end if necessary.

2" piece of cinnamon stick; 125g (4oz) raisins or sultanas and the same of chopped dates.

Method:

1. Place the chopped mango into a large mixing bowl, sprinkle with the salt and pour the water over. Cover and set aside for 24 hours. This will draw out excess water, making the liquid proportions correct, as vinegar is used.
2. Drain the mango and rinse through gently.
3. Place sugar and vinegar in a large pan and bring to the boil, checking that the sugar has dissolved.
4. Add all the remaining ingredients and bring back to the boil, stirring occasionally. Turn the heat down so it bubbles away gently. (I remove the lid, so it doesn't create more moisture)
5. Keep your eye on it while it simmers and when it is thick, discard the cinnamon stick.
6. Do a taste check, allowing the sample to cool right down first. Add more chilli a small amount at a time if you like.
7. Bottle, seal and label. This will keep for ages and will yield approximately 3 standard jars.

Good as it is or try some stirred into natural yogurt for your curry accompaniment.

Recipe: Pinwheels. Take a sheet of puff pastry and cover it with a layer of chutney, then grated carrot, then a layer of cheese. Avoid the edges, otherwise it will squidge out! Roll up like a Swiss roll, from the long side and seal the long edge. Slice sections, turn over and place on a baking tray before patting down slightly with a suitable flat knife or palette knife.

Bake in a hot oven until puffed up and golden. A delicious party snack.

Piccalilli

You need: 3lbs prepared vegetables, cut into small even sized pieces; 8oz salt; 3 ½ pints water; 4oz demerara sugar (although granulated white still works); 1oz cornflour; 1 tbsp mustard powder (I use a level dessertspoon of Dijon) 2 tsp. turmeric powder; 1tspn ground ginger; 1 ½ pints vinegar, white or malt, or a blend.

Method:

1. Place vegetables in a large bowl. Sprinkle with salt and pour water over. Cover and leave for 24 hours. This will draw out the water, retaining the crunch needed in the vegetables and will also result in the correct liquid measurement.
2. Drain the vegetables and rinse a few times. They will retain some saltiness.
3. Place everything in a large pan, but keep a little of the vinegar aside, to mix with your cornflour at the end.
4. Bring to the boil then simmer until the veg just have a little crunch to them.
5. Mix the cornflour with the remaining vinegar and stir into the pan, adding it a little at a time until you reach a suitable consistency.
6. Simmer for another minute or so, stirring often.

Do not boil or simmer for too long, otherwise it will go back to being runny.

Place the piccalilli into warm sterilised jars and seal while hot. Approximate yield: 5 jars

Some recipes recommend it is stored for 3 months before using, but it is equally good to eat straight away.

Quickles: Cut up any raw vegetables such as cucumber, onion, carrot and mangelwurzel into even smallish pieces or slices. Stick into a clean jar and pour over vinegar. Add a little sugar if you like, for a sweeter quickle. Or use a jar of finished cornichons, for example, keeping the vinegar and using that instead.

Green Tomato Chutney

Recipe from Riverford Organics

You need: 750 g green tomatoes, washed and chopped; 350g shallots or onions, chopped; 200g cooking apples, peeled, cored and chopped (I use eaters, because I like the pieces, rather than apples which 'fall'); 300ml malt vinegar; 2 red chillies (or to taste- depends on the chilli!); small piece fresh root ginger, peeled; a few yellow mustard seeds (optional); 100g raisins or sultanas (dried apricots are good, too); 1 tsp salt; 200g brown sugar.

Method:

1. Put tomatoes, shallots or onions and apples into a large preserving (or other suitable) pan with half the vinegar.
2. Bring to the boil and gently cook until tender- about 30 minutes. Tie the chillies, mustard seeds if using, in a muslin bag. Bruise with a rolling pin or hammer and add to the pan with the raisins or sultanas.
3. Cook on a low heat, stirring occasionally until it thickens- about 1 hour.
4. Add the salt, sugar and remaining vinegar, stirring well, until the sugar dissolves.
5. Cook until thickened. Remove muslin spice bag and pot into sterilised jars while still warm
6. Seal and leave to mature for 6 weeks, which gives you plenty of time to purchase a good piece of strong cheddar cheese which is a perfect partner.

Wild Garlic Pesto - Very Easy

Don't be tempted to gather copious amounts of garlic leaves. It goes quite far once made. I suggest a large sandwich bag- (28cmX 23cm) full and see how you get on with it. Gather them between March and May, leaving the bulbs intact as much as possible.

As mentioned during the meeting; one member has kindly offered to bring some wild garlic to the hut, for distribution. The hut is open every Sunday from 10 till 12 pm, from February onwards and is situated on West View Allotments.

Check out our website: www.clitheroegardenclub.co.uk

Place washed wild garlic leaves (100g) thoroughly, checking there are no rogue leaves in there, such as Lily of the Vally or Lords and Ladies. You don't want these in your pesto!

Spin in a salad spinner or whizz round in a tea towel. Using a food processor which chops, stick the leaves in with a glug of good olive oil and some grated parmesan or similar hard cheese and whizz for a bit. Then add some nuts (About 50g- I use a mix that come in a packet from a well-known German supermarket). Pine nuts are lovely but pricey and you can't really tell the difference. Keep blitzing, occasionally stopping to incorporate everything. Add more olive oil if you need to. Squeeze in some fresh lemon juice (Not the plastic lemon version), salt and pepper to taste. Make sure the pesto is covered in extra olive oil. This will add to its shelf life. **Refrigerate.**

Wild Garlic leaves are also good chopped up in a savoury quiche using asparagus, especially as they are in season at the same time. Look for recipes and experiment. Wild food is free and there is more than you think.





Or put it on a pizza!

Preserved Lemons

A great store cupboard luxury. Couldn't be easier to prepare and will save you so much money! Apart from that, they are far superior to the watery ones found in the shops. They are worth waiting for and you can keep admiring them every time you see them on your shelf or in your cupboard.

You need: Unwaxed lemons- try about 6 for a large Kilner type glass jar; coarse salt, a cinnamon stick, a couple of cloves and a bay leaf or two

Method:

1. Make sure your jar is clean. Rinse with boiled water and shake out the excess. No need to dry.
2. Cut each lemon down from the top to the bottom but not right through. Cut it as though you were quartering it. It will look like an open flower, but obviously in the guise of a lemon.
3. Rub salt into each lemon. Don't be shy with the salt. This draws the moisture out of the fruit.

4. Pack them into the jar tightly, inserting the cloves, bay and cinnamon stick at random. If the cinnamon stick is long, break it into two and place them at opposite sides of the jar.
5. Make sure you have filled the jar as much to the top as you can.
6. Close the jar.
7. Go to the cupboard marked "Patience" and take out about 3 months' worth. At least.
8. They are ready when they turn slightly darker and liquid has started to fill the jar.

Preserved lemons are used in many Middle Eastern and Moroccan recipes, including meat, fish and vegetarian cuisine. Try Yotam Ottolenghi's recipes or Sabrina Gayhour's- all fabulous.

The rind only is used, though I do put the flesh back into the jar, just in case! It seems such a waste to throw it away.

Experiment with it. Apparently, it is good in a cream cheese and smoked salmon bagel.

They keep for ages!

Dandelion Syrup

For those who love to forage, this is delicious on yoghurt, pancakes, ice cream, breakfast cereal or Madeira Cake. It can be used as a cordial also.

What you do: Collect dandelions (you only use the flowers) from a suitable area. Remove the flowers from the stalks by cutting the yellow petals from the green bit into a large bowl. Cover with boiling water and leave overnight. The water will look a strange grey colour. This is normal.

Strain the liquid into a large pan. You will then need to weigh the liquid. If you have a litre of liquid, you will need a litre of sugar, so it is the same amount of sugar as liquid.

Bring the liquid and sugar to the boil gradually, stirring until the sugar has dissolved, then simmer until it thickens into a syrup consistency. It will turn a golden colour.

You can add lemon juice if you like. Bottle and label. Left unopen, it should keep for a long time. Once opened, use within a couple of weeks. You will be able to tell when it is past its best.

Check out: Northwildkitchen.com. A delightful Norwegian website with all the information you need on dandelions. It is in English and well worth a read. The recipe above is mine, but they also have their own recipe.



Blackcurrant Jam

You need: 2lb blackcurrants, stalks removed; 3lb sugar; 1 ½ pints water. Leave the little tops on, unless you want to spend a week preparing them.

Method:

- 1) Wash the fruit gently if it is dirty, drain, then put into a preserving pan with the water.
- 2) Stew slowly until they are soft. This will take at least half an hour. Stir frequently as it thickens, to prevent burning.
- 3) Add the sugar and stir over a low heat until dissolved.
- 4) Then boil until setting point is reached, which will not take long- about 10 minutes.
- 5) Done! Pour into prepared jars and cover.

NB Don't add the sugar too soon, or you will have hard currants.

Source: Mrs Beeton's Book of Cookery and Household Management

NB: To speed up the process, spread the sugar onto a baking tray and pop into the oven to warm. You can do this whilst you are warming your jars for sterilisation. Then add your sugar as in No 3 and continue. Thanks, Angela!

Quick Bottled Pears

I often prepare these. They are delicious and simple to do. They should last for about a week and can also be eaten straight away. They make a lovely pudding served with whatever you fancy. They are also a lovely light alternative to a Christmas pudding- just add more cinnamon and perhaps a few raisins into the jar for more of a festive flavour.

You need: Enough pears of choice for a large jar, such as a Kilner Jar. Water and sugar (See method); Cinnamon sticks (to taste); Cloves (optional) sultanas or raisins (optional)

Method:

1. Peel the pears, leaving the stalks on and place in a pan with water to just cover the fruit. Add the sugar and cinnamon sticks. Add the cloves, sultanas or raisins if you like.

Quantities: 600ml water and 125 g sugar is a good ratio

2. Bring gently to the boil then simmer until they are **just** soft. This won't take long; it depends on the size of the pears. Test with a skewer. Don't allow them to become too soft, or they will fall apart.
3. In your prepared jar, carefully lift the fruit and place top to tail (they will fit better) until the jar is full.
4. Pour the syrup in, making sure the pears are covered
5. Close the jar whilst still hot. If using straight away as a pudding, simply serve!
6. Keep in a cool place and eat within a week.

Suggestions: Fresh cream, ice cream, yogurt, on porridge or breakfast cereals, with chocolate, toffee or butterscotch sauce, in a trifle, in a Knickerbocker Glory. With custard, or simply on their own!

NB Complete preservation using the bottling method is a different thing altogether. Although not difficult, it is more time consuming. The advantage though, is that bottled produce keeps for much longer and many vegetables and fruits can be preserved in this way.

Rhubarb

If you have a glut of rhubarb, I recommend making this delicious chutney, though I haven't included a recipe. You will find them on the internet or in any good book on preservation.

Tips:

Always use clean jars and bottles and sterilise them by warming for 10 minutes in the oven. You can also put them on a hot wash in the dishwasher but don't dry them with a tea towel. Just shake excess water out from them.

Make sure you have waxed discs and cellophane jar covers and rubber bands, to seal the jars before putting the lid on.

Screw topped jars are good but make sure they are not corroded. Kilner type jars are also good. The Range have a good selection of jars and bottles.

Label your produce and always put the date on. Dawsons stock a good choice of labels etc. Or order from Lakeland at www.lakeland.co.uk

They sell dissolvable labels which save all the scraping and scrubbing.

Allow plenty of time to make your pickles and preserves.