

Put a
lid on it



IN A PICKLE

TRY YOUR HAND AT A CENTURIES-OLD METHOD
CHAMPIONED BY GRANDMAS AROUND THE WORLD

WORDS JO STEWART

Gherkins galore: put a glut of
vegetables to good use by pickling.
OPPOSITE: Damian Sandercock and
goods from Piper Street Food Co.

Before working in fine-dining restaurants in Melbourne and the UK, Damian Sandercock's culinary roots lay in the family home. "I started my apprenticeship by cooking with my mother and grandmother," he says.

Now based in the picturesque town of Kyneton, in Victoria's Macedon Ranges, Damian makes the most of produce grown in the surrounding farmland by offering pickling and preserving workshops at Piper Street Food Co. With the links between improved gut health and regular consumption of fermented foods well-known, more people are seeking to learn the old-school art of pickling and preserving.

In days gone by (before refrigeration, convenience stores and supermarkets became commonplace) pickling homegrown vegetables was essential. Damian explains that while the world has changed, people still crave an understanding and appreciation of the pickling and preserving processes that previous generations cultivated out of necessity.

"Nowadays, there's no real need to pickle and preserve since we can buy these items from grocery stores, but people [still] do it because they appreciate the process and derive enjoyment

and satisfaction from encapsulating the seasons in bottles," he says.

Whether driven by a desire to reduce food waste, reap the health benefits of eating fermented foods or master a new kitchen skill, Damian's pickling and preserving classes are popular with people from all walks of life, from hip young foodies with expensive pickle habits to retirees keen to begin pickling their backyard produce.

While Damian suggests sticking to the fundamentals when pickling (use sterile jars; add sugar to balance out the acidity), he encourages experimentation with flavours. "In Australia we now have access to ingredients that previous generations didn't. For example, spices from the Middle East are readily available and well suited to savoury pickle recipes," Damian says.

Generous with his time and knowledge, Damian is happy to see people learn the art of food preservation. "I don't like the idea of chefs closely guarding their recipes and never sharing them. For me, food is all about generosity," he explains. "Food brings people to the table."

Damian holds a variety of cooking classes and workshops year-round at Piper Street Food Co. ✈️
piperstfoodco.com



Savoury pickled vegetables

METHOD

1. Wash, cut, peel and slice the vegetables.
2. Combine the water, sugar, vinegar and salt in a pan, and bring to the boil before taking off the heat.
3. Pack the vegetables and preferred herbs and spices into clean, sterilised jars (see below) and fill with the hot pickling solution.
4. If necessary, wipe jars clean with a damp cloth and seal firmly with a sterilised lid. Pickles will keep longer if stored in the fridge.

TO STERILISE JARS

1. Place your jars in a canning pot, or very large pot, right side up.
2. Fill the pot with water, covering the jar tops by 3cm.
3. Bring the water to the boil and continue boiling for 10 minutes.
4. Reduce the heat and keep the jars in the hot water until you're ready to fill them.



INGREDIENTS

- 1kg seasonal vegetables (carrots, cauliflower, cucumber, green beans and beetroot work well)
- 1 cup water
- ¾ cup sugar
- 2 cups white wine vinegar
- 1tbsp salt

OPTIONAL EXTRAS

Natural spices and herbs such as peppercorns, mustard seeds, star anise, whole cloves, coriander seed, pimento, fennel seeds, juniper, garlic, onion, bay leaves, as well as sprigs of thyme, dill or rosemary.

