

Preserving your Produce

– Recipes

It is important to think about what sorts of things you actually will eat and use. There is little point in making oodles of jam, if you don't eat much of the stuff, unless you wish to give it as presents. You will probably find it is a process of learning by trial and error, as the sorts of things that you can create yourself may not just like everyday goods from the supermarket. For example, one less successful creation from my own experience was elderberry ketchup – which was made and rarely used. One great success, however, was making a mango-style chutney using locally grown cherry plums. Please see the separate notes on methods of preserving, covering jams, chutneys, drying and bottling. In these notes some simple, pleasing recipes are detailed. These could form useful staples in your food cupboards, replacing the need for some shop-bought goods, such as canned tomatoes, passata sauces, stir-fry sauces and cordial / squash.

- Berry Cordials / juices
- Tomato passata sauce
- Chinese style plum sauce
- Mango style cherry plum chutney
- Spiced tomato and sweetcorn relish

Berry Cordial

You can make a delicious cordial or syrup from many types of berry, throughout the summer and autumn. Place your fruit in a pan and bring quickly to the boil. Boil the fruit for about a minute, then turn off the heat, and crush the fruit with a masher, or wooden spoon. To separate the juice from the pulp, use a scaled jelly bag, and strain overnight. Extract as much juice as you can. Then add the sugar – 350g for each pint of juice extracted, stirring well until the sugar is dissolved. Heat up your syrup / cordial, and bottle into clean, sterile bottles. If you wish to store this for longer than a few weeks, you may wish to further heat treat the bottled cordials, either in an oven or in a water bath.

Tomato passata sauce

The versatile sauce makes a great basic ingredient, meaning that you can enjoy local tomatoes for more of the year, and you have a ready-made tasty sauce to have with pasta, to spread over your pizza base, or to create a tomato-based curry. The quantities and ingredients may vary according to what you have available.

Tomatoes
onions
garlic
pepper
courgettes
fresh herbs

Chop up your tomatoes and place in a large pan on the heat, and reduce the liquid down. Add in courgette, and pepper if you have these and wish to include them in your sauce. Reducing may take sometime. If you are doing large quantities, you may wish to use more than one pan to increase your surface area, as this will speed the process up. Lightly fry your onions and garlic, which can be added to your tomato pan(s). You can also consider oven roasting some of your tomatoes, onions and garlic, as this can give a sweeter, richer flavour. Use a food processor or hand blender to purée your sauce. When it has reached a consistency that you are happy with, then it is time to turn off the heat, and start to ladle it into clean, sterile jars. At this stage only loosely fit the lids. As this sauce does not

contain high levels of sugar or vinegar to preserve it, a bottling process is required to ensure that it is well sealed. Place the jars on a backing tray, which should then go into the oven set to just less than 100° C, so that the contents don't boil over. After 45mins – 1 hour, remove from the oven, and tighten the lids (wearing oven gloves!).

Chinese style plum sauce

This is nice to add to stir-frys, or for dipping.

6 lb plums
4.4 lb sugar
A little oil
3 onions, chopped
2 - 3 bulbs of garlic, chopped (depending on size) - lots of cloves, anyway!
2 large chillies, chopped
5- 6 "thumbs" of ginger, grated
3 - 4 teaspoons of Chinese 5 spice
1/2 pint vinegar

Combine the plums (stoned) and the sugar and heat in a large pan, stirring until the juices of the plums mix with and dissolve the sugar.

Bring it to a rolling boil, and scoop off any scum.

Then turn the heat down, and cook slowly, reducing the fluid, and letting the fruit & sugar caramelize. (May take 2 - 3 hours!)

In a separate pan, fry the onion, and then after a few minutes, add the chopped garlic, chillies and grated ginger, and Chinese 5 spice.

When the plum mix has reached a consistency that you are happy with (I was looking for something fairly jam like), add in the fried onion and spices and pour in the vinegar.

Mix up the contents of the pan, and keep on the heat for long enough for the vinegar to be brought up to temperature too.

Pour or ladle into clean, sterile jars!

Mango-style Cherry Plum style chutney

3 lb stoned cherry plums (or ordinary plums)
5 tspn salt
9 cups water
1 lb sugar
2 _ cups white wine vinegar
2 inches fresh ginger, chopped
6 cloves of garlic, crushed
2 tbsp hot chilli powder
1 cinnamon stick
1 cup pitted dates
1 cup raisins

Place the stoned plums in a bowl. Add the salt and water and set aside in a cool place for 24 hours. Place the sugar and vinegar in a heavy bottomed saucepan and bring to the boil, stirring until the sugar is dissolved. Strain the plums, and discard the juice. Add the plums to the sugar vinegar syrup. Add the remaining ingredients, and bring to the boil, stirring frequently. Reduce the heat and simmer, strring occaionaly for about 1 _ hours until the chutney is very thick. Remove the cinimon stick, and ladle the chutney into clean, sterilised jars and secure the lids.

Spiced tomato and sweetcorn relish

1.5 kg Tomatoes, chopped
1 cob of sweetcorn
440g Sugar
2 large onions, chopped
2 cups vinegar
1 tbsp vegetable oil
2 – 3 cloves garlic
2 teaspoons cummin seeds
1 teaspoon fennel seeds
1 teaspoon fenugreek seeds
1 teaspoon black onion seeds
1 teaspoon brown mustard seeds.
Juice of 1/3 a Lemon

Combine tomatoes and onion in a large saucepan and add sugar and vinegar. Bring to the boil and simmer, stirring frequently for about 40 minutes or until mixture is reduced and thickens slightly.

Combine the spices, and fry in vegetable oil. Stir the spices into tomato mixture, add the corn and simmer, stirring for 2-3 minutes until mixture thickens.

Spoon into clean, sterilised jars and seal when cool.

Leave out the sweetcorn to make a delicious spicy tomato relish.