

Ginger Peach Chutney

Makes 6 pints



Chutney is a condiment that is made from fresh fruits and plentiful spices, and is an excellent digestive. It simmers on the stovetop for almost an hour until it reaches a glossy sheen; packed into jars and stored for several months, it builds up plenty of intense flavor.

2 cups cider vinegar
1 large yellow onion, halved and thinly sliced into half moons (1 cup)
1 fresh cayenne hot red pepper, seeded and minced
1 fresh jalapeno hot pepper, seeded and minced
1 tablespoon pickling or kosher salt
1 tablespoon yellow mustard seed
4 pounds ripe (not overly ripe) peaches (about 8 peaches)
1 cup dried cranberries or currants

1/2 cup crystallized ginger, snipped into small pieces

In a large stockpot, bring the sugar and vinegar to a boil over medium high heat, stirring to dissolve the sugar. Stir in the onion, hot peppers, salt, and mustard seeds. Reduce the heat to medium and cook at a brisk simmer for ten minutes.

Meanwhile, bring a large stockpot of water to a boil, and gently immerse the peaches.

Remove after one minute, drain, cool slightly in a colander, and slip off the skins.

Over a large bowl, pit peaches and cut into slices and then into roughly 1/2- to 1-inch chunks. There will be about 6 cups of chopped peaches. Drain the excess juice that will collect in the bottom of the bowl (it is a wonderful sweet nectar for the cook to drink!) and add the peaches to the simmering vinegar brine. Stir in the cranberries and the ginger.

Continue to simmer over low-medium heat and allow the chutney to cook for about 45 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the peaches and the brine take on a glossy look. Take care not to overcook the peaches, because they will cook again once the canning jars are processed, and it is best to have chunks remain.

Once you've deemed the chutney ready, fill 6 pint-sized sterilized jars; wipe the rims clean with a hot towel and screw on the sterilized lids. Flip upside down to seal. Place in hot water bath for 10 minutes, remove and cool. Label and set on a shelf in a cool dark place for a minimum of 3 months t