



Folly Farm

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HEIRLOOM VEGETABLES ♦ SEED BANK ♦ GOURMET GARLIC

Grandma Haeger's Kosher Dill Pickles

I found Grandma's original recipe hand-typed on the same size paper as Papa's Sabbath sermons, a size that tucked neatly into his Bible. My mind was flooded with memories. Grandma didn't type; Papa typed well at about 35wpm with two fingers. He certainly typed this up for Grandma, long before she replaced her previous recipe book: *"Fixed this Feb. 28, 91 as my old book was Kaput. Mary"*

Stained with pickle juices and altered many times in Grandma's hand, the actual steps took a while to decipher – 3 years and a visit from my father, Mel. Until summer of 2011, taste was good but the texture was mush. After we had stuffed the jars and added the brine, I asked how long Grandma processed them in the hot water bath. Dad tilted his head, raised his brow, and that was enough: "Process? Never! These pickles are kosher. They cook themselves in the jar."

Grandma's recipe is pretty easy to make. Gather all the goodies together first, and then start stuffing. Wide mouth jars are best because they're easier to get into. Here goes, in Grandma's words:

Fill your quart jars with cucumbers which you have soaked in ice water for three (3) hours.

Add:

- 1/2 bay leaf
- 1 or 2 small chili peppers
- 3 carrot sticks
- 3 pieces of celery
- 3 pieces bell pepper
- 3 pieces onion
- 1 clove garlic (big)
- 1/2 tsp pickling spice
- 1/2 tsp mustard seed
- some dill
- 1 grape leaf
- little horseradish leaf

Make a brine as follows: 22 cups of water, boil real good, add one cup salt (not iodized). 1 tsp powdered alum. Boil.

Pour this over cucumbers and seal. After seal shake well.

In a week shake again, and they are ready to eat.

Stuff Grandma didn't say:

Use Kosher salt and fresh dill.

The brine will fill about 12 well-stuffed quart jars.

"Seal" means just put the lid on and tighten the ring. When they're cool enough to handle, start shakin'.

One week is just long enough to wait; several weeks or a month is even better.

Jars may be leaky, lids may pop up, and the juice may fizzle like soda pop when opened. All this craziness is good.

These pickles keep for a year, at least.

I am convinced Grandma put 3 carrots in each jar so none of us grandkids missed out: one each for Sherry, Cindy, and Bill.