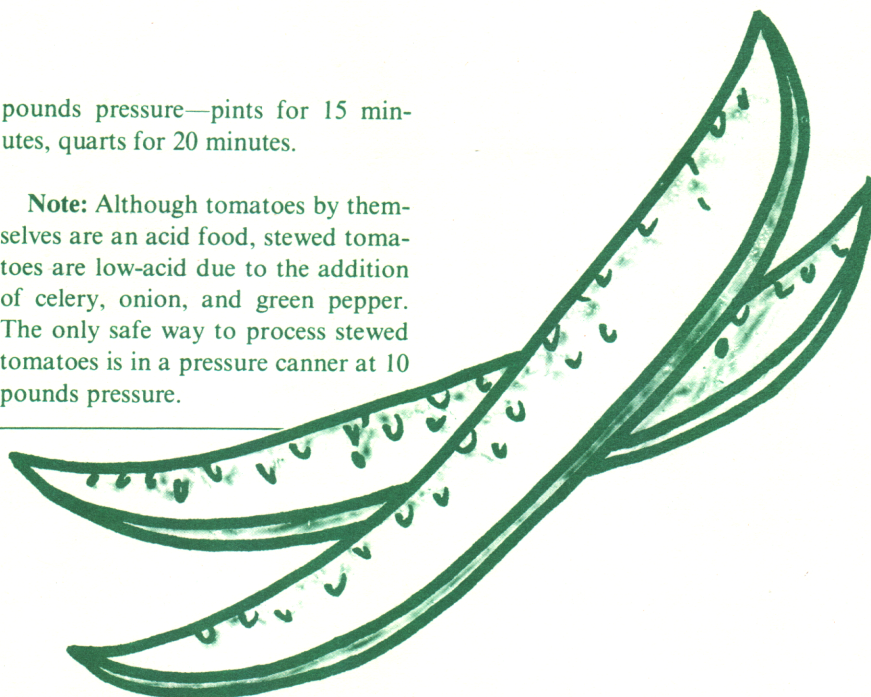


loosen skins, dip into boiling water for about ½ minute, then dip quickly into cold water. Peel, core, and chop tomatoes.

Combine all ingredients. Heat to boiling and cook 10 minutes, stirring occasionally to prevent sticking. Pack boiling-hot tomato mixture into clean, hot jars to ½ inch from top. Adjust lids. Process in a pressure canner at 10

pounds pressure—pints for 15 minutes, quarts for 20 minutes.

**Note:** Although tomatoes by themselves are an acid food, stewed tomatoes are low-acid due to the addition of celery, onion, and green pepper. The only safe way to process stewed tomatoes is in a pressure canner at 10 pounds pressure.



## Directions for Pickling

Like fruits and tomatoes, pickled products are acid foods. There are two types of pickled products, fresh-pack and fermented. **Fresh-pack pickled products** are made with vinegar which contains acetic acid. Examples are quick dill pickles, bread and butter pickles, and pickled beets. **Fermented pickled products** contain lactic acid produced by bacterial fermentation. Brined dill pickles and sauerkraut are examples. They take more time and effort to prepare than fresh-pack products.

### Use Pickling Cucumbers

For cucumber pickles, use a variety of cucumbers grown especially for pickling rather than immature slicing cucumbers. Start pickling the cucumbers as soon as possible after harvesting. Wash them thoroughly, using a vegetable brush. Remove all blossoms; they may be a source of the enzymes that soften cucumbers during brining or fermentation. Don't use waxed cucumbers for pickling.

Use either cider vinegar or white distilled vinegar containing 4 to 6 percent acetic acid. Cider vinegar has a milder flavor but may discolor light-colored pickled products. Don't use homemade vinegar, as the acidity is unknown.

Use pure salt which is sold as pickling, canning, or Kosher salt. Kosher salt is coarse. Pickling or canning salt

may be either granulated (like ordinary table salt) or flake. Flake salt is labeled as such. If "flake" is not on the label, you can assume that the pickling or canning salt is granulated. For 1 cup of pure granulated salt, substitute 1⅔ cups of pure flake salt or 2 cups of Kosher salt. Uniodized table salt can be used instead of pure granulated salt, but the anti-caking ingredients may cloud the pickling liquid. Iodized salt may darken pickles.

Water used for pickling should be moderately soft. If it is very hard, boil it and allow the minerals to settle. Then strain it through several layers of cloth. Chemically softened water may be too soft for pickling. Unless there are some minerals (especially calcium and magnesium) in the water, pickles may be soft. It might be best to use a blend of one part hard water to two parts softened water.

Use whole spices. Powdered spices may darken the pickles or cloud the pickling liquid. One tablespoon of dill seed may be substituted for 3 heads of fresh or dried dill. However, fresh dill—picked just as the flowers are beginning to open—is more flavorful than either dried dill or dill seed.

### Use Proper Utensils

For brining or fermenting pickles, use a crock or stone jar, an unchipped enameled pan, a large glass bowl or jar, or a food-grade plastic container.

Plastic containers that are intended for use with foods like mixing bowls, food keepers, or cake savers are food grade. Large food-grade plastic containers are available at winemaking supply stores. Don't use plastic pails or trash cans for brining pickles. Undesirable compounds could migrate from these containers into the brine.

For heating pickling liquids, use unchipped enamelware, stainless steel, or aluminum utensils. Don't use iron, copper, brass, or galvanized (zinc-coated) utensils. These metals may cause color changes in the pickles or they may dissolve in undesirably high levels in the pickling liquid.

### Don't Pack Tightly

**Pack pickles loosely into jars**, leaving plenty of room for the boiling-hot pickling liquid. This is especially important for whole cucumber pickles. If they are wedged so tightly into jars that hot pickling liquid cannot get between them, they may spoil.

Process pickled products in a water bath canner. Most up-to-date guides to pickling recommend using a boiling water bath. However, to help keep pickles crisp, a **simmering water bath** (about 200° F.) may be used instead. Wait until the water in the canner is simmering (as indicated by bubbles rising and collapsing just below the surface) to start counting the processing time. Keep the water at a simmer