

Pickles

Pickles. Who does not love them? Sweet, sour, made from cucumbers or other vegetables, they are the perfect garnish for any meal. The obvious, tangy dill slice to top off the perfect hamburger. Sweet pickles to accompany a tuna sandwich. Beet pickles to dress up a casserole or salad. The possibilities are endless.

I have made pickles for over fifty years, beginning with Grandma Burtness's Beet pickles. These are a favorite of mine, as well as that of my in-laws who have carted them to homes from Indiana to the Colorado Rockies.

I have two favorite dill pickle recipes: one sweet, containing onions, the other with a touch of garlic

Then, there are Virginia Chunk sweet Pickles, a favorite of my siblings. These tasty pieces are achieved through a three-phase, ten-day brining process. The first phase is a weeklong soak in salt brine. After this comes a three-day bath in alum water. The third phase is a three-day soak in a vinegar, spice and increasingly sugar solution as the pickles cure.

It was during phase one and particularly hot weather, my husband came upon what he thought was a nasty, spoiled batch in the basement. He threw them out.

He did this only once. We had to have our Virginia Chunks.