



## **Watertown Farmers' Market Culinary Corner**

**August 12, 2020**

Welcome to Eat Well Watertown's Culinary Corner! Each week, we'll feature Watertown Farmers Market products and vendors. We'll offer nutritional and culinary tips, and recipes for you to experiment with. We hope that you'll be encouraged to try new or unfamiliar vegetables and fruits, and we'll help you pair them with meats and fish from the Farmers Market walkway.

### **Putting Foods By**

Written By: Eat Well Chef Ilana

I spent this past weekend putting foods by. Do people remember that phrase? I grew up with it, as my mother and her neighbors spent the dog days of August in steaming kitchens cooking and canning garden and orchard bounty, to have all winter.

My putting things by is different, and more manageable for someone with a full-time job and only two people in the household! In my case, it was making tiny batches of things that don't need the full on pressure canner, in order to not let my box of produce from Dick's Garden Market go to waste.

Some thoughts for those who aren't quite ready to fill a root cellar with canned garden goods:

### **Refrigerator or Freezer Jams**

Consider taking that quart of peaches, if you haven't eaten them all, and cooking them just a bit to make a freezer or refrigerator jam. An internet search turns up hundreds! But the basics are:

- 3 cups of cut (or small) fruit plus 1 cup of sugar will cook down to about 2 cups of jam
- Always add some lemon juice
- But of course, adjust lemon juice and sugar to taste
- Bring to a boil – a full rolling boil – and keep it there for at least 15 minutes
- Use the “gel test”: drop a bit onto a plate you've had in the freezer; if the mixture doesn't move you're good to go. If it drips, keep cooking.

- If it still doesn't set up, you can stir in pectin powder (e.g., SureJell for Less or No Sugar Needed Recipes), according to package directions, mixed with a bit of sugar. Always bring the mixture back to the boil after adding the pectin.

No need to seal the containers in a water bath; this jam will be good for a couple months in the fridge, or you can put it in the freezer to REALLY enjoy in February!

Freezer Jam is even easier, and requires no cooking at all! You do, however, need to use much more pectin – and you need to be sure you buy pectin specifically formulated for freezer jams.

Basically, you mash fruit, lemon juice, and sugar with the pectin, let it sit, then spoon into freezer-safe containers.

## Quick Pickles

Beyond cucumbers, pretty much any vegetable you can eat, you can also pickle (think green beans, broccoli, cauliflower, carrots...). And, as with refrigerator jams, unless you need to stock up for the entire winter, it's an easy task to boil up a quick pickling brine and pour it over raw or blanched veggies that you've stuffed into a Mason jar. Then set the jar at the back of your fridge for a few days, and let the brine work its magic, and you'll have pickles to serve alongside all your grilled proteins!

As a rule of thumb, 1 pound of vegetables, cut up, will fit, packed tightly, into two pint jars. No matter what veggie I'm pickling, I'll also slice an onion to throw into the jar. The ratios for a basic brine are below, but be sure to experiment with any herbs or spices you like!

- 1 cup vinegar (white or apple cider)
- 1 cup water
- ¼ cup granulated sugar
- 1 tablespoon kosher salt
- Other add-ins: Dill sprigs, rosemary, crushed garlic, red pepper flakes, pickling spice, whole peppercorns – the options can be pretty much endless!

Cut the veggies into slices/bite-sized pieces, and pack them tightly into the two clean jars, leaving a ½ inch at the top. Put all the brine ingredients into a small pot, and bring to a boil. Stir to dissolve the salt and sugar. Pour the brine into the two jars, leaving a ½ inch at the top. Tightly seal the jars, let cool on the counter. When cool, put in the fridge. Give them at least 24 hours in the fridge before eating. And they'll keep for about a month in the fridge.

So, without heating your kitchen, you can experiment with small-batch preserving!

Sources: [www.thekitchn.com](http://www.thekitchn.com); [www.cooksillustrated.com](http://www.cooksillustrated.com)