

PICKLE DISHES IN THIRTY MINUTES

30分鐘，動手做醃漬料理

Pickles are known for their health benefits, especially when prepared at home rather than shop-bought. Not only that, but they are ready to serve in no time. Start now and upgrade the flavours of fresh vegetables, fruits, seafood and meat. Amanda knows just how to make use of these delicious pickles in homemade dishes, and in these pages, serves us the readers platefuls of healthy and yummy cuisine.

Pickle • Vegetables—

Cucumber, carrot, Chinese flowering cabbage...

Pickle • Seafood & Meat—

Pork, clam, whitebait, cuttlefish...

Pickle • Mushrooms—

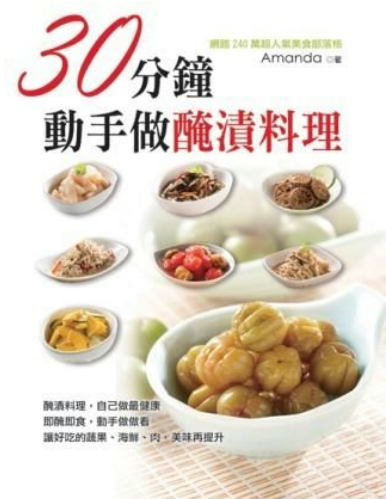
Enoki mushroom, Shiitake mushroom, knotted kelp, agar...

Pickle • Fruits—

Guava, crispy plum, watermelon rind, green mango, tomato...

Amanda

Amanda is a full-time housewife and food blogger. She started her food blog in 2006, and has received over three and a half million hits to date. Amanda loves to create her own recipes, which she shares alongside posts about her life.



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Preface

Everyone Is Able to "Pickle Healthily, Eat Healthily"

There were urns and urns of pickles in my house when I was a little girl. By doing so, people preserved the surplus produce to minimize the loss from over-production. Occasionally, when there was a special vegetable sale in the market, my parents would also buy some and preserve them by pickling or sun drying.

I can recall that we did not like some kinds of pickles. The reason was that we didn't like to eat those vegetables in the first place, and in addition to it, they really were too salty! To keep pickles from rotting, my elders always added too much salt. People now are more aware of health care issues, knowing that salty foods could affect one's health. As a result, my parents also have already started to cut down the use of salt when they are pickling food.

However, you might have to worry that pickled food would easily become rotten when cutting down the use of salt. Therefore, if you want to prevent pickles from going bad, there are a few principles to keep in mind.

1. What should be dry can not be wet.
2. Cautiously preserve it.
3. Use the right tools.
4. Drying and washing are equally important.

Bear the four basic principles in mind, and I believe that you will definitely make some healthy and yummy pickle food.


Amanda's Cooking Class
Q: What is bacteria-free water?

A: Distilled water, purified water all can be called bacteria-free water. If you are concern about the tap water in your house, you may go to a convenience store and buy some distilled water.



As a matter of fact, the most concerning part of pickling is that ingredients become moldy and rotten. Other than the use of salt, the making process and preservation condition are both vital. Some have to be put in the room temperature to wait for fermentation, and some have to be stored in the refrigerator for later use. Not just the above, you also have to pay attention to many other things while you are preparing the ingredients.

First of all, especially for those foods which need to be pickled and stored for a long time, tap water is forbidden to use in the pickling process. It would be better if you use distilled water or bacteria-free water to wash the ingredients in the very beginning, unless it will be sun dried or water boiled again during the process.

The best container for preserving pickles is a glass jar. It can avoid releases of toxic chemicals. Make sure you do not use a plastic one, especially for the food that needs to be pickled for a long time.

You should also be alert while you are using kitchen utensils or tools to prepare food. They must be clean, not oily, and dry. Only in this way, you can make sure that your food won't become moldy and rotten.

Needless to say, whether it is about making pickles or any other fine food, the key to delicacy or disaster is often the measurement of each portion and the correct use of tools. Once you mismeasured or misused, in the end it may waste all the ingredients. As a result, in the following page, I listed all the tools that will be used in this book and what the quantity means in every dish. Just open up your mind, follow the steps, and you will find you are on the way to an expert in pickling!



Must-Have Tools for Pickling



Scale:

The proportions of the main and other ingredients have to be correct. A small scale is convenient for measuring weight.



Measuring cup:

It is convenient for measuring when you need to add condiments or water.



Measuring spoons:

Even though the amount of seasoning used is not much, you still need to have a set of measuring spoons when salt or sugar need to be added.



Rock:

Some ingredients have to be pressed by a rock to squeeze the spicy and bitter water out, so a good-sized rock is a must-have.



Peeler:

It is for peeling the rinds or skins from fruit or vegetables quickly and evenly. The pointy tip can be used for digging out the seeds.



Grater:

If you need to cut a bunch of vegetables or fruit into shreds, using a knife could be slow and tiring. At this moment, a grater will come in handy.



Skimmer:

A necessity while you are washing small ingredients (dried shrimp, dried small fish). It is more essential at the process of deep frying.



Stainless steel plate or bamboo basket:

It is indispensable while sun drying vegetables or fruit.



Glass jar:

For packing and storage of pickles, it is very useful.



Measuring Spoons Used in the Book

1 tablespoon is equal to 15 cc, and weighs 15 g.

1 teaspoon is equal to 5 cc, and weighs 5 g.

1/2 teaspoon is equal to 2.5 cc, and weighs 2.5 g.

1/4 teaspoon is equal to 1.25 cc, and weighs 1.25 g.

Measuring Cups Used in the Book

1 cup is equal to 200 cc.

1/2 cup is equal to 100 cc.

Now, let's get started making some appetizing, savory, tasty, and colorful pickles with Amanda!



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Innovative Snack

Pumpkin Pickled with Plum Vinegar

Time required: 1.5 hours

Tastes best in: 1 day

Expires in: 3 days

Nutritive value of pumpkin: protein, carbohydrate, iron, dietary fiber, carotenoid, calcium, potassium, vitamin A, B vitamins, phosphorus, chromium

You may be totally wrong about pumpkin if you still have the impression that we can only make sweet soup, congee, or western cream soup out of it.

Pumpkin has high nutritive value, and you can cook it in many ways, either you want it to be salty or sweet. Except for sweet soup and cream soup, I like to use it to make noodles, dumplings, and pumpkin cakes, which are even more delicious. Of course, pumpkin is the main ingredient of the famous Penghu dish, fried rice vermicelli with pumpkin.

You probably haven't tried to eat raw pumpkin. This method will definitely surprise you with how refreshing that pickled pumpkin can be. Furthermore, because of the pretty color of golden yellow, people often mistake the pumpkin that I served for mango.



Pumpkin has a lot of pectin, and can help reduce the cholesterol absorption and lower the cholesterol level. That is why pumpkin is complimented as “good food for lowering blood sugar and Cholesterol.” Diabetes patients can occasionally replace rice with pumpkin. It could be beneficial to many things. For one thing, they will be full after eating, and also, their blood sugar and cholesterol would be lowered down.





Ingredients: 1 pumpkin, 2 tablespoons of salt, 120 cc of plum vinegar, 1 lemon, 2 tablespoons of white sugar

- If the vinegar you use already contains sugar in it, then there is no need for white sugar.

Steps:

1. Peel the pumpkin by using a knife. Scoop out the seeds with a spoon. Cut the pumpkin into four equal portions, and then in thin slices. **A**
2. Add salt to the pumpkin and wait for 1 hour. After that, wash the slices in distilled water and drain the slices. **B**
3. Wash the lemon clean. Use 3/4 to squeeze juice, and cut the rest in thin slices. **C**
4. Plum vinegar, lemon juice, lemon slices, and white sugar are added to the pumpkin slices. Mix them properly. **D**
5. Put it in the refrigerator and let the pumpkin be marinated in the mixture. It will be ready to serve in half day.



A

Tips

Do not slice them too thick. Thin slices have better texture.



B

Tips

Make sure the pickling time is long enough, so that the dish won't tastes bitter.



C



D

How to Eat Healthily

Once the bittersweet pumpkin is marinated in plum vinegar, it will gain the aroma and sweet and sour taste from the plum. This dish is light and appetizing, and is very suitable to be a salad in a hot day.

You can also enjoy the dish along with fresh fruit and veggies, make a veggie and mushroom shashlik, or wrap it with bell pepper in lettuce. Every way is nutritionally balanced, excellently tasty, and extremely colorful. They are not just eye-catching, but very mouth-watering as well.

Pickled Pumpkin with King Trumpet Mushroom

Ingredients: 10 slices of Pumpkin Pickled with Plum Vinegar, 1 king trumpet mushroom, 5 small tomatoes

Tools:toothpicks

Steps:

1. Prepare a bowl of iced water in advance. A few ice cubes in it is fine.
2. Wash and drain the king trumpet mushroom. Slice it.
3. Blanch the king trumpet mushroom for 10 seconds and then soak it in the iced water. Take it out and drain it.
4. Wash the small tomatoes and cut them in half.
5. Put a tomato, a mushroom, and a slice of pumpkin onto a toothpick.
6. You will have ten sticks of it. Put them on a plate and glaze them with some plum vinegar sauce.

Amanda's Kitchen Notebook

Do you want to boost your immunity? Just eat pumpkin. But, you may wonder, “How to pick a perfect pumpkin?” There is a little secret.

A fully mature pumpkin is sweeter, so pick a maturer one is always a better decision. Normally, the skin is harder for a maturer pumpkin, so it is not too difficult to tell. If you like the rind to be softer, let me tell you another secret. You can poke a small hole on the rind and touch the juice flowing out. The stickier the juice is means the pumpkin contains more sugar, and you know which one is more mature.

Sour in Taste, Sweet in Heart

Sweet and Sour Young Ginger

Time required: 5 hours

Tastes best in: 10 days

Expires in: 25 days

Nutritive value of ginger: protein, fat, carbohydrate, coarse fiber, beta-Carotene, vitamins, calcium, phosphorus, gingerol

Ginger is a very healthy food. The winter cuisine, sesame oil chicken soup, and stewed herbal soups will never taste right without old ginger. As for young ginger, it is in season throughout the summer. It will be a pity if we don't pickle some.

There are salty flavor and sweet flavor that you can choose between to pickle the young ginger. I prefer the sweet flavor. Think about that, if you were eating sushi without gari (sweet and sliced young ginger), no matter how delicious the sushi was, you would still feel something was missing.

To make this pickle, young ginger is a better choice. It is the sprout of ginger with pointy tail, and is about 5 to 8 centimeters long. If you cannot find young ginger, you can use long and thin tender ginger instead. However, do not pick big and chunky tender ginger because it is not only more fibrous but also spicier.



Some pregnant ladies are prone to morning sickness. They can eat some ginger to prevent it. People who are sensitive to cold can drink the ginger decoction to help the body resist cold weather. In recent years, ginger has been added to many weight loss products because it contains gingerol, which has the effects of improving blood circulation, driving away coldness, perspiring, metabolizing calories, improving bloating, enhancing digestive system, nourishing energy, reducing body swelling. As a result, no matter whether you drink it or use it for bath, you can achieve the goal of losing weights.





Ingredients: 600 grams of young ginger, 20 grams of salt
Marinade: 4 tablespoons of white sugar, 100 cc of glutinous rice vinegar, 250 cc water
Tools: A rock or a cast iron pot

Steps: _____

- 1. Cut off the bottom of the ginger and shave off the small knobs on the surface. Wash it and drain it. **A**
- 2. Mix it well with salt. Wait 3 hours for it to be softened. **B**
- 3. Press it with a 2 kg rock or a heavy cast iron pot for 1 hour. **C**
- 4. After pressing, the ginger will become dried and looks a little bit flat. **D**
- 5. Wash it and drain the salty water. **E**



A



B

Tips
You can prolong the shelf life by using distilled water to wash.



C



D

Tips
The ginger becomes crispier and won't taste tart after pressing.



E

Make the Sweet and Sour Marinade: _____

- 1. Add white sugar, glutinous rice vinegar, and water into a pot. Boil it over low heat, and then turn off and let it cool down.
- 2. After the sweet and sour marinade cools down, pack the ginger with the marinade in a jar. Store it in a refrigerator.
- 3. Soak the ginger through for 3-5 days and the dish will be ready. The ginger will be swollen after marination.

How to Eat Healthily

When I eat sushi, there is only one way that can fulfill my appetite, which is one sushi with one slice of young ginger. However, the side dish is always terribly inadequate. Everything just goes wrong after I eat up that few slices.

I love to make the sweet and sour young ginger myself. By adding more sugar or more vinegar, I can sweeten or sour it as much as I want, and the most important thing is that I will have so many slices that I can eat as many as I want.

The ginger not just goes with sushi or rice ball. It also fits well with blanched seafood. This side dish offers you another refreshing choice other than the greasy salad dressing.

Rice Ball (recipe for two)

Ingredients: 1-1.5 bowl(s) of steamed rice, 1-2 sweet and sour young ginger, 2 tablespoons of dried radish (minced), 1/2 fried dough stick, 2 eggs, a pinch of salt, 1 scallion, 2 tablespoons of pork floss, 1 tablespoon of shacha sauce

Amanda's Kitchen Notebook

Young ginger is juicy, tender, and almost not hot. You could eat it uncooked or pickled, but one disadvantage is that it is not easy to preserve. After collecting the ginger, farmers will wash it, so it will go bad within a few days in a fridge.

Old ginger is different. It could be carried directly to the market after dusting off the dirt. Just leave it in a dry and ventilated place and don't let it get wet, and it can be stored for a long time. It is edible even if it sprouts. However, if by any chance it becomes rotten, never eat it, because at that time, a cancer hazard, safrole has already been generated in it.

- Steps:**
- 1. Thin slice the sweet and sour young ginger. Wash the scallion, cut off the head and tail of it, and mince it.
 - 2. Break the fried dough stick into two and heat it in the oven to crisp it. After heated, use the paper towel to soak up oil.
 - 3. Beat eggs and add minced scallion and salt into it. Preheat the pan and pour one teaspoon of oil. Fry scallion egg and divide it into two.
 - 4. Wash and then drain the dried radish. Pour half teaspoon of oil in the wok. Stir-fry the dried radish over medium-low heat until the smell comes out. Stir-fry a few more seconds to take it out.
 - 5. Get the steamed rice out. Loosen the steamed rice to cool it down.
 - 6. Wear food prep gloves for heat insulation. Put on another heat-resistant plastic bag outside.
 - 7. Take 1/4 of the rice and spread it on your palm.
 - 8. Brush a little shacha sauce on the rice. Put one fried scallion egg, proper dried radish and pork floss, a few ginger slices, and one fried dough stick on top of the rice.
 - 9. Cover the stuffing by adding 1/4 of the rice on the top. Use both hands to knead a rice ball. Make sure the stuffing won't fall out.

Warm Your Stomach Pickled Garlic

Time required: 30 minutes

Tastes best in: 2 months

Expires in: 5 months

Nutritive value of garlic: protein, calcium, phosphorus, selenium, vitamin A, B vitamins, vitamin C, vitamin D, etc.

Garlic is indispensable while I stir-fry vegetables, stew fish, or simmer pork. This is my thing, and I will be very bothered each time the garlic gets pricy. The taste is insufficient if using less garlic. Although there is imported garlic, I still prefer the Taiwanese garlic, which has the spiciness and strong flavor.

Boys in my family all love to eat grilled sausage with raw garlic. If I forget to prepare, I may have to deal with all their complaints as if the sausage is uneatable without garlic. So, you can see the small garlic has a great influence in my place.



According to a study of Washington State University, the compound (diallyl disulfide) in garlic is one hundred times more effective than antibiotics at fighting bacteria.

Garlic doesn't just fight against bad intestinal bacteria; it helps develop beneficial bacteria as well. Garlic can also avert clotting of blood, prevent stroke, and protect heart and blood vessels.





Ingredients: 600 grams of garlic, 450 cc of soy sauce, 3 tablespoons of sugar, 120 cc of rice wine

Steps:

1. No peeling; only clean up the dirt around the garlic. Cut off the root cluster. Wash and drain it. **A**
2. Pour rice wine, sugar, soy sauce into a pot, and boil it over low heat. **B**
3. Poach the garlic in it for 2 minutes. Then, turn off and let it cool down. **C**
4. After cooling down, pour them into a jar and place the jar in a shady place for 20 days. **D**
5. The marinating soy sauce can be used for cooking or dipping.


A

B

C

Tips

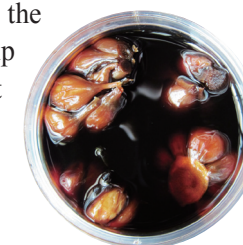
Do not blanch the garlic for too long in case it is well-cooked.


D

How to Eat Healthily

Garlic is a very healthy food and spice, but some people are scared away by its hot and strong flavor. The well-cooked garlic will have nutrient loss. The pickled garlic will become less spicy, and it can be served with vegetables or tofu after peeling and slicing.

Using so much soy sauce for marination, but when you eat up the garlic, what can you do about the soy sauce? You can use it as a dip when serving sliced boiled pork. It is even perfect as condiment when you want to stir-fry or stew meat or fish.



Amanda's Kitchen Notebook

We often hear people say they do not like the garlicky smell. Indeed, garlic is spicy and hot, and the breath is really smelly after you eat it. However, garlic plays a key role in many cuisines.

The aroma won't be perfect if you stir-fry without garlic. Steamed garlic prawns have the abundant umami because a great deal of minced garlic is added. In the dish called typhoon shelter crab, fried garlic crisp is even the pillars of it.

Tofu with preserved egg and pickled garlic

Ingredients: 1 pickled soy sauce garlic, 1 tablespoon of the marinade, 2 preserved eggs, 1 packaged tofu, 1 tablespoon of mirin, one scallion

Steps:

1. Peel and slice the pickled garlic. Cut off the root of the scallion, wash and then mince it.
2. Blend the marinade and mirin together.
3. Drain the water in the packaged tofu. Put it on a plate.
4. Shell the preserved eggs. Cut them into pieces. Put the pieces round the edge of the plate.
5. Garlic slices on top of tofu. Glaze the marinade sauce. Sprinkle the minced scallion as a final touch.

Taste of High Class Liquor Flavored Cuttlefish

Time required: 30 minutes

Tastes best in: 2 days

Expires in: 3 days

Nutritive value of cuttlefish: protein, fat, EPA, DHA, taurine, vitamin E

During the Chinese New Year, it is the major fishing season of cuttlefish. Cuttlefish, therefore, becomes an important dish on the table of family reunion dinner. People can always buy extra-size cuttlefish during that period, but the cost is relatively “extra.” For a nuclear family, the portion may be above the regular.

I measured that cuttlefish which weighs four hundred to five hundred grams is just appropriate for a family consists of three to four members. Everyone has a few slices just enough to feel the pleasantness that food brings.

Cuttlefish is a kind of food that has low calories and high nutrition, which is rich in EPA, DHA, and vitamin E. Other than the previous, there is also high level of taurine that can reduce cholesterol accumulated on vascular wall, boost brainpower, slow aging, complement the liver function, protect vision, and prevent Alzheimer’s disease. It is a very good food for middle-aged person and seniors. However, even though it has low fat, it contains high purine which may become uric acid through metabolism. If the level of uric acid is too high in our blood, it would cause painful inflammation of the joint, so people have gout condition should cut down on the consumption.





Ingredients: a cuttlefish weighs 400-500 grams, 2.5 teaspoons of salt, 1 ginger, 3 scallions, 2 tablespoons of goji berry, 9 tablespoons of Shaoxing wine, 1 tablespoon of rice wine, 1/2 teaspoon of sugar, 400 cc of strained broth or water

Preparing the Marinade:

- 1. Boil goji, ginger, scallions, and salt in the broth or water. Turn off after three minutes of boiling. **A**
- 2. Add Shaoxing wine and rice wine in it. **B**



A



B

Tips

Cook the marinade first, so that you have time to cool it down.

Steps:

- 1. Wash the ginger and slice it. Wash the scallions and chop it.
- 2. Wash the cuttlefish and drain off the water. **C**
- 3. Prepare another pot of water and add in a few ginger slices and scallion pieces. After the water is boiled, blanch the cuttlefish over medium heat for 7-9 minutes. Take it out to cool off. **D**
- 4. Soak the cuttlefish in room temperature marinade completely. Place it in a refrigerator for one day. **E**

Tips: The whole cuttlefish must be soaked in the marinade entirely so that it will be flavorful.



C



D

Tips

Do not overcook the cuttlefish or its texture will become hard.



E

How to Eat Healthily

Meat or seafood does not need special seasoning. Just marinating them with wine will bring out their fine taste. The cuttlefish is ready to serve after pickling, in strips or in bite-sized cubes. The pickling marinade is still useful for stewing or making seafood or fish soup.

If you don't want to keep serving the same dish in the following few days, you can reform the recipe with other ingredients. Make a quick dish of cuttlefish temaki by using nori and some julienned lettuce. Or, you can try the one introduced below, deep-fried cuttlefish rolls, which is rolled by tofu skin.

Deep-Fried Cuttlefish Rolls

Ingredients: half of the liquor flavored cuttlefish, 3 tablespoons of the marinade, 3 sheets of tofu skin, 100 grams of ground pork, 3 water chestnuts, 2 scallions, 1 celery, 2 slices of ginger, 1 tablespoon of flour, 1.5 bowls of oil

Steps:

- 1. Dice the cuttlefish. Wash the ginger slices and mince them. Cut the roots off and wash the scallions, and mince them. Cut the root, trim the leaves of the celery, and then wash and mince it. Peel the water chestnuts, and then wash and dice them.
- 2. Add minced ginger, diced water chestnuts, and marinade in ground pork, and blend them together until it gets sticky. Then, add in the diced cuttlefish, minced scallions and celery, and well-mixed it again.
- 3. Mix flour with 1 tablespoon of water to make the batter.
- 4. Take one sheet of tofu skin, and spread 1/3 of the cuttlefish pork filling. Leave a 2 centimeter space around the edges.
- 5. Roll up the sheet one circle and stop to fold the two sides in. Then roll it up all the way, and seal the closing end with the batter.
- 6. Preheat pan, add oil in it and heat oil to 120 degrees C.
- 7. Then turn to medium-high heat. Gently put in the cuttlefish rolls. Deep-fry the rolls till the outside starts to turn dark brown and crisp.
- 8. Before taking them out, turn to high heat and deep-fry 10 more seconds to make them less greasy.

Amanda's Kitchen Notebook

Cuttlefish is inkfish, or squid that people are familiar with. A novice usually can't tell the difference between cuttlefish and inshore squids. Here are the techniques that people can use for distinction.

Cuttlefish has a round and wide shape of the top, and is a bit tapered to the bottom. Before it is skinned, the color of it is like maroon. In its body, cuttlefish has a hard shell which is known as cuttlebone. The texture of cuttlefish is thicker. An inshore squid is long and thin shaped. Before it is skinned, the color is reddish. An inshore squid has a gladius in its dorsal center, and the texture of an inshore squid is thinner.

Food for Your Body and Brain

Salmon Fillet cured with Monascus

Time required: 10 minutes

Tastes best in: 2 days

Expires in: 3 days

Nutritive value of salmon: protein, omega-3 fatty acids, calcium, iron, B vitamins, vitamin D, vitamin E

Salmon contains much fat, so you only need a little oil to pan-fry it. If you are using a non-stick pan, cooking can be oil-free. When you are pan-frying a salmon fillet, the oil keeps flowing out. But don't be shocked by that. Fish oil is a healthy fat.

This fish has few bones and juicy meat, so it's my son's favorite. He is especially into salmon miso soup because the fish is soft and the soup is delicious. He sometimes will order this soup when he come back home at holidays. After all, salmon is not cheap, and a student lives away from home has to save every penny.

In fact, besides salmon miso soup, we also like salmon sashimi. We mostly enjoy it in Japanese restaurants so that we can savor each morsel of all the fine food there. Sushi is a must-order, and you can not afford to miss out on grilled miso fish. Speaking of grilled miso fish, salmon can be pickled and flavored, too. Blend miso and white sugar into rice wine, and spread the fillet with the sauce. Put it in a refrigerator one to two days for the flavor to penetrate through. You have to scrape off miso sauce before grilling, or your fillet will be burned before it is well-cooked.

Salmon has the benefits of purifying blood, reducing cholesterol in blood vessels, preventing degradation of eyesight, activating brain cells, and preventing cardiovascular disease. In addition, B vitamins in salmon could drive away fatigue; vitamin D could help the absorption of calcium. It is a highly nutritious food ingredient. Salmon sashimi is also on the list of most popular kinds of sashimi. However, fish is easy to be contaminated by parasites, so it is better to be processed through freeze-drying and sterilization before it goes into your mouth.





Ingredients: 1 salmon fillet (around 200 grams), 2 teaspoons of monascus sauce, 1/2 teaspoon of salt, 1/4 teaspoon of sugar, 1 teaspoon of rice wine, a dash of white pepper powder

Steps: _____

- 1. Wash the fillet. Pat it dry with a paper towel. **A**
- 2. Blend monascus sauce, salt, sugar, rice wine, white pepper powder together thoroughly. **B C D**
- 3. Spread the sauce evenly on top of the fillet. Put it in a refrigerator for one days and it's ready to cook. **E**
- 4. If you are not going to eat it right away after three days, you'd better store it in the freezer.



A



B



C



D

Tips

You can get rid of the fishy smell by adding rice wine.



E

How to Eat Healthily

The cured salmon fillet could be cooked by grilling or pan-frying. Grill or broil in the oven by 250 degrees C for 15 to 20 minutes, and then it's ready to serve. Or, you can use a non-stick pan with its lid on and grill the fillet over low heat.

Pan-frying is easy for a man to burn the monascus sauce, so one has to be very careful. Pan-fry at low heat. Either you are grilling or pan-frying by a non-stick pan, do not overcook the salmon in case it becomes too dry to eat.

If someone doesn't like the fishy smell, you can prepare some ginger juliennes for balancing the taste, or you can make lettuce wraps with cured salmon fillet as the main ingredients.

Lettuce Wraps

Ingredients: one salmon fillet cured with monascus, proper amount of lettuce leaves, 1/3 of an onion, ground black pepper

Amanda's Kitchen Notebook

Salmon is one of the commercial deep-sea fish, and because deep-sea fish contains a lot of omega-3 unsaturated fatty acids, nutritionists often suggest people to eat. Indeed, I've learned it in my experience that fresh deep-sea fish is very good for one's health. My husband has rheumatoid arthritis, and when the disease first attacked, he hurt so badly that he even couldn't get out of the bed by himself. Other than the treatment and doctor's prescription, the recommendation that the health educator gave me about cooking more deep-sea fish and less deep-fried food is very helpful as well.

Steps:

- 1. Wash the lettuce leaves. Drain off or pat-drying the water. Peel the onion, and wash and mince it.
- 2. Grill the monascus salmon fillet in the oven (as above). Take it out to cool off.
- 3. Mince the fish, and mix it with the minced onions and ground black pepper.
- 4. Take one lettuce leaf and put on appropriate amount of mixed fish. Wrap it up and it's done.



Hometown Flavor Delivered Dried Small Fish with Fermented Soybeans

Time required: 30 minutes

Tastes best in: 1 month

Expires in: 3 months

Nutritive value of dried small fish: protein, calcium, omega-3 unsaturated fatty acids, iron, magnesium, phosphorus, potassium, zinc, copper, manganese

Nutritive value of fermented soybeans: protein, fat, calcium, phosphorus, iron, cobalt, selenium, molybdenum, thiamine, riboflavin, niacin

Fermented soybeans were a hometown flavor that my father would send to me. The sweet and aromatic soybeans are grown and harvested in the Hakka village in Neipu, Pingtung. I always love to have them fermented and use it to make a side dish that goes perfect with steamed rice. That is the dried small fish with fermented soybeans, which is also my parents' favorite.

Luckily, my parents are not too old to chew up the small dried fish. I will make a few jars of it and send them home to my parents every other time. Thinking about that they are eating it with smiles on their faces, this picture will always warm up my heart.

You can have dried small fish with fermented soybeans with plain rice congee. It is even more suitable for stir-frying vegetables. Prepare a small jar of it in your fridge, and you can add extra flavor to your dish and life in no time.

There is some advice for you. If you want to purchase small dried fish, it is better to choose the fish that their bodies are complete, has silver belts on both sides, and has no broken parts on their bellies. If you use your hand to touch the dried fish and feel sticky, it means that the dried fish might probably have got damp. If there is white powder on the dried fish, it means the dried fish has been stored for a longer time. The above two situations are the examples of dried fish which is not fresh and not tasty.

