

Pickling Spice Mixes

Pickling spices is a variety mix of whole spices, not just one in particular. Common spices may include: coriander, cumin, mustard, peppercorns, dried hot peppers (jalapenos), cloves, bay leaves and even fennel. Depending on the brand, though, the types and amounts will vary; shop around.

The mix can be used as is, or, they can be pulverized in a small food processor or in a coffee grinder. I buy small amounts, about two - three cups worth, which I pulverize and keep in a well sealed plastic bag that's stored in a canning jar. The pulverized mix can be kept for three - four months, provided it's stored in a cool and dry place, away from sunlight, heat and humidity, in the kitchen.

Whole pickling spices can be used in:

Boiled Chicken,
Beef,
Pork (ribs)
Some types of Fish

Pulverized pickling spices can be used in:

Tomato based sauces
Salad dressings
Flour mixtures for fried foods, especially chicken
Soups.

Below is a typically British spice mixture which can be purchased ready-mixed, but some cooks prefer experimenting and emphasizing different flavours. Sometimes the spices are crushed before adding to the mixture; for other recipes the spices are tied into a cheesecloth bag, which can be removed after cooking. In some recipes, the bag of spices may be boiled with the vinegar, then allowed to infuse. The spices are then discarded and the flavoured vinegar is used in the pickle.

Ingredients:

- 1 tablespoon coriander seeds
- 1 tablespoon mustard seeds
- 1 tablespoon black peppercorns
- 1 tablespoon cloves
- 3 or 4 dried red chillies
- 1" (2.5 cm) piece dried ginger root
- 1" (2.5 cm) piece cinnamon stick
- 3 dried bay leaves

Preparation:

- Mix all the spices. Tie them in a piece of cheesecloth and use as directed in recipe.
- Alternatively, place the spices in a stainless steel or enamelled saucepan and pour in vinegar.
- Heat gently until boiling, allow to cool before straining the vinegar, then discard the spices.
- To make cold spice vinegar, add the spices to a jar or bottle of vinegar and leave to infuse for two days.
- Strain and use as required; the spices may be discarded or used to flavour another bottle of vinegar.

2 other typical mixes

40 ml Peppercorns
20 ml Allspice Berries
20 ml Mustard Seeds
20 ml Coriander Seeds
10 ml Red Pepper Flakes
7.5 ml Ground Ginger
5 ml Cloves
5 ml Bay Leaves

20 ml Whole Allspice Berries
20 ml Coriander Seeds
10 ml Ground Ginger
6 Star Anise Pods
20 ml Whole Cloves
113 g Cinnamon
20 ml Whole Peppercorns (white or black)
20 ml Whole Cardamom Pods
20 ml Whole Mustard Seeds (optional, brown or yellow)
3 Large Bay Leaves (optional, crumbled)
20 ml Red Pepper Flakes (optional)