

# SPICE OF THE MONTH

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## September's spice is pickling spice!

As the baking heat of the summer ebbs away to make room for the cool, breezy mornings and evenings of early autumn, many home gardeners are plucking the last of the season's harvest. Eggplants, tomatoes, okra, zucchini, and so many other fruits and vegetables ripen, beginning a race to make the most of extra produce before it's too late.

But there's another option! Agriculture was developed long before cold storage was available, and people needed to make sure they had healthy, palatable food to eat over the winter months.

Enter the pickle. According to food historian Lynn Olver, the first known pickles in human history were made circa 1000 BCE, in Egypt, from fish and melons. And while the new taste and texture of these foods took some getting used to, pickles of one kind or another have become a beloved part of almost every cuisine across the globe.

Pickles can be made by submerging produce in a vinegar solution or putting it through a fermentation process. And although pickles might typically bring to mind the ubiquitous brined cucumber, almost anything can be a pickle: ceviche, tomatoes, onions, okra, and even sweet, spicy, and slightly tart preserved apples.

The pickling spice mix in this month's kit contains yellow and brown mustard seeds, allspice, cinnamon, bay leaves, dill seed, cloves, ginger, black peppercorns, star anise, coriander, juniper, mace, cardamom, and crushed red pepper. This month's recipes may use some but not all of these ingredients — feel free to follow the recipes to the letter, or use the spices in this blend for a slightly different (but still delicious!) pickle.

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**All books listed here are available to check out from the Croton Free Library!**

### **Our sources:**

- *Pickled, Potted and Canned* by Sue Shepherd
- The food timeline by Lynne Oliver: [foodtimeline.org](http://foodtimeline.org)

### **The recipes in this kit are:**

- Bread and Butter Chips and Dill Spears from *Put 'Em Up* by Sherri Brooks Vinton (p. 184-5)
- Pickled Three-Bean Salad from *Ball's Complete Book of Home Preserving*, ed. by Judi Kingry and Lauren Devine (p. 310)

### **See our cookbook collection for additional info & recipes, like:**

- Pickled Asparagus from *Well Preserved* by Eugenia Bone (p.115)
- Red Cabbage Pickle or Pickled Beets from *Preserve It!* by DK Publishing (p.208-9)
- Pickled Green Beans from *Jam It, Pickle It, Cure It* by Karen Solomon (p. 33)

**What did you make with your pickling spice?**

Post it on social media with the hashtag  
**#CrotonSpiceClub** and tag us, or send a photo &  
description to [ref@crotonfreelibrary.org](mailto:ref@crotonfreelibrary.org)!

**Pickling spice purchased from Penzey's.**