

Miss Emma's Pickled Peaches

*Courtesy of Sue Haas and **In Our Grandmothers' Kitchens***

Ingredients:

8 pounds fresh peaches (about 16 medium peaches)
4 pounds sugar (about 9 cups)
1 pint white vinegar
whole cloves (6 per peach = 96 cloves)
4 sticks cinnamon

Equipment:

large canning pot with rack
large cooking pot for heating water to peel peaches
large cooking pot for syrup and peaches
cheesecloth (cut a piece about 8 x 12 inches)
string
teaspoon
4 to 5 sterilized pint canning jars, new lids, and screwbands (sterilize in dishwasher or in boiling water in large canning pot with rack)

Instructions:

Preparation of canning pot:

Fill large canning pot with enough water to cover the two quart-size canning jars. Bring water to boil and keep hot.

Peeling peaches in hot water & adding cloves:

Boil about 2 quarts of water in a big cooking pot. Remove from heat. Place peaches in hot water for about 1 minute, or long enough so that skins may be peeled off easily. Remove peaches from water and cool in colander. Peel peaches and discard peels. You may cut peaches into halves or leave them whole. I cut them in half, but it's tricky to keep them intact. Whole peaches are easier. Insert 3 cloves into each peeled peach half. Set aside.

Cinnamon spice packet:

Make a spice packet with 4 sticks of cinnamon wrapped in a piece of cheesecloth. Tie a string to close the bag. Leave one end of string long enough to reach over the side of the pot to pull out when syrup has thickened. You may tie the long end of the string to a teaspoon to weigh it down so it won't slip back into the pot.

Note from Tinky: I just made a little knot in the cheesecloth and removed the cinnamon with a slotted spoon later. I couldn't find my string!

Syrup:

Mix sugar and vinegar in a large cooking pot. Add the cinnamon packet to the pot. Heat on stove to boiling. Turn down and let simmer about 30 minutes until syrup turns golden and thickens.

Cook peaches in syrup:

Place peaches in the syrup and cook about 10 minutes on medium heat until soft. You may have to add the peaches in batches, depending on the size of the pot. When the peaches have finished cooking remove the cinnamon packet from the liquid. (You may save the cinnamon sticks and place one in each jar of pickled peaches if you like.)

Canning peaches:

Place peaches in the jars and pour syrup to about half an inch from the top of each jar. Seal with new canning lids and screw on screwbands. Place sealed jars on rack in hot water bath in large canning pot, making sure tops of jars are covered with water. Boil gently for about 10 minutes. Bubbles of air will come out of the jars.

Remove jars from water bath and let sit on a tray without moving them for about 24 hours. You'll know jars are sealed if you hear the lids pop, and they are flat (not convex) when you press the tops with your finger.

Makes 4 to 5 pints. You will have quite a bit of leftover syrup. You may use it to can more peaches, serve it as an appetizer over cream cheese, or make a cocktail with it. (Tinky here: I'm thinking maybe something with rum?)