



Royal
Botanic Garden
Edinburgh

Botanic Cottage Community Cook Club 21st Dec 2020

Something to make

Beetroot and apple chutney

Beetroot is in season in winter, just when it's cheery red colour is needed to brighten up our kitchens. This beetroot and apple chutney is a gorgeous glossy deep red colour and handing over a jar tied with a ribbon feels very festive. I'll leave my jars to mature for at least a week, two if I can and it should keep for at least six months - as long as your jars are sparkling clean (see note below). In this recipe I use a mixture of eating and cooking apples which allows me to lower the sugar content a little while still getting the jammy qualities of the cooking apples. If you'd prefer to use all cooking apples, please do, though I'd suggest adding a few extra tablespoons of sugar. This recipe needs a large pot and makes 5-6 jars, for a smaller batch just halve all of the ingredients, the cooking time will still be similar.



Ingredients

- 500g beetroot, peeled and finely diced
- 1 large or 2 small red onions, peeled and diced
- 500g eating apples, peeled and roughly chopped
- 500g cooking apples, peeled and roughly chopped
- 200g sultanas or dried cranberries
- 650ml red wine vinegar
- 300g soft brown dark sugar
- 2 tsp salt
- 1 tsp mixed spice
- 1 tsp ground ginger OR 1 tbsp grated fresh ginger

Makes 5-6 jars (depending on size of jars)

You will need a large heavy based pot, a chopping board, a peeler and a knife, a wooden spoon, 6 clean jars and 6 small circles of baking paper (the size of your jar lids).

Method

1. First peel and prepare your fruit and vegetables. Beetroot takes a while to cook so small dice are best, the apples will take less time so roughly chopped is fine. Peel and dice your onion too and everything in a heavy based large saucepan or pot.
2. Add the spices, dried fruit and the sugar and then pour over the vinegar.
3. Turn on the heat and bring to a simmer.
4. Let the chutney slowly putter away for about an hour, stirring occasionally to make sure it doesn't catch on the bottom. As it cooks it will become thicker and more 'jammy'. The test I use to see if it's ready is when a line made by a spoon on the bottom of the pan takes a few seconds to disappear. Unlike jam, chutney is fairly forgiving so give it a little longer if you're not sure.
5. Carefully spoon the chutney into your hot jars (see below). Use a small spoon or a skewer to get rid of any air bubbles before pressing a circle of baking paper onto the surface of the chutney. Put the lids on and write some pretty labels in your best handwriting.

Sterilising jars - the boring but important bit! The vinegar in your chutney should stop the growth of mould, but any dirt in your jars can spoil them. To sterilise your jars first wash in hot soapy water (or use a dishwasher) and rinse but don't dry. Then place the jars upside down in the oven. I usually do this when I've finished cooking something else and the oven is cooling, otherwise heat to around 130 degrees and heat for around 15 minutes and then leave until completely dry. Be very careful handling hot jars, always use a tea towel to hold them and don't touch the rim or inside the jar if you can avoid it.