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How to Make Homemade Pickled Watermelon Rinds



You think making and canning your own pickled watermelon rinds is difficult or expensive? Not at all! You can do it with basic equipment already in your kitchen - you just need a canning pot. And thanks to the vinegar in pickled watermelon rinds, you can use a plain open water bath pot (or a pressure canner, without the weight on)

So, here's how to can pickled watermelon rinds! The directions are complete with instructions in easy steps and completely illustrated. In the winter when you open a jar, the pickled watermelon rinds will taste MUCH better than any store-bought Canned Pickled Watermelon Rinds!

The recipe is easy, but you'll need to 2 days in total, as the rinds need to soak in brine for 3 to 4 hours, then are quickly cooked (10 minutes), then must rest in the fridge over night.

Prepared this way, the jars have a shelf life of about 12 months, and aside from storing in a cool, dark place, require no special attention.

Ingredients and Equipment

Yield: About 4 or 5 pints.

- 3 quarts (about 6 pounds) watermelon rind, unpared
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup salt
- 3 quarts water
- 2 quarts (2 trays) ice cubes
- 9 cups sugar
- 3 cups 5% vinegar, white
- 3 cups water
- 1 tablespoon (about 48) whole cloves
- 6 cinnamon sticks, 1 inch pieces
- 1 lemon, thinly sliced, with seeds removed
- Jar grabber (to pick up the hot jars)
- Jar funnel (\$2 at Wal-Mart)
- At least 1 large pot
- Large spoons and ladles
- Ball jars (Publix, Wal-Mart carry them - about \$7 per dozen pint jars including the lids and rings)
- 1 [Water Bath Canner](#) OR a pressure Canner (a large pressure pot with a lifting rack to sterilize the jars after filling about \$75 to \$200 at mall kitchen stores, Wal-Mart, cheaper online; [see this page for more about pressure canners](#)).

Directions for Making Canned Pickled Watermelon Rinds

Yield: About 4 or 5 pints.

Ingredients

- 3 quarts (about 6 pounds) watermelon rind, unpared
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup salt
- 3 quarts water
- 2 quarts (2 trays) ice cubes
- 9 cups sugar (Yes, you may substitute Stevia or Splenda if that is your need or preference)
- 3 cups 5% vinegar, white
- 3 cups water
- 1 tablespoon (about 48) whole cloves
- 6 cinnamon sticks, 1 inch pieces
- 1 lemon, thinly sliced, with seeds removed



Equipment

- At least 1 large pot
- Large spoons and ladles
- Ball jars (Publix, Kroger, other grocery stores and some "big box" stores carry them - about \$7 per dozen pint jars including the lids and rings)
- Jar grabber (to pick up the hot jars)
- Jar funnel (\$2 at mall kitchen stores and local "big box" stores, but it's usually cheaper online from our affiliates)
- 1 [Water Bath Canner](#) OR a pressure Canner (a large pressure pot with a lifting rack to sanitize the jars after filling about \$75 to \$200 at mall kitchen stores and "big box" stores, but it is cheaper online; [see this page for more about pressure canners](#)).

Watermelon Rind Pickles Recipe and Directions

Step 1 - Wash the watermelon!

I'm sure you can figure out how to scrub the watermelon in plain cold or lukewarm water using your hands or a vegetable brush.



Step 2 - Make the brine solution



Make the brine by mixing the $\frac{3}{4}$ cup salt with 3 quarts cold water. Stir well.

Step 3 - Prepare the watermelon

Trim the pink flesh and outer green skin from thick watermelon rind. Cut into 1 inch squares or any shapes you desire. You only want the white portion. Of course, you can give the red parts to your kids to eat while you're cooking! And the red part [makes great watermelon jelly!](#)





Step 4 - Brine the watermelon rind

Cover with the brine solution from step 3. Add the 2 trays (2 quarts worth) of ice cubes. Let stand 3 to 4 hours* or overnight**.

(* USDA recommendation; ** Ball Blue Book recommendation; USDA is more recent, so that's the minimum)



Step 5 - Prepare the seasoning mix

Combine

- 1 tablespoon (about 48) whole cloves
- 6 cinnamon sticks, 1 inch pieces

tied in a clean, thin, white cloth. I use a baby's ice lollipop bag (available at mall kitchen stores, Target and other local "big box" stores) as it is reusable and easy to use (see the photo).



Step 6 - Drain and rinse

After the 3 to 4 hours minimum brining has elapsed, drain and then rinse in cold water and drain again.



Step 7 - Cook the watermelon rind

Cover the watermelon rind with cold water and cook until almost fork tender, about 10 minutes (do not overcook). Halfway through (after 5 minutes), add the sliced lemon.



Step 8 - Cook the seasoned syrup mix

While the watermelon rind is cooking, combine

- 9 cups sugar
- 3 cups 5% vinegar, white
- 3 cups water



and the seasoning mix bag from step 6 in a large pot and boil for 5 minutes.

Step 9 - Drain the watermelon rind and add to the seasoned syrup.

Drain the watermelon rind and add to the seasoned syrup solution from the previous step (remove the syrup from heat).



Step 10 - Chill overnight

Let the watermelon rind and seasoned syrup stand overnight in the refrigerator.

Step 11 - Prepare the jars and canner

Wash the jars and lids

This is a good time to get the jars ready! The dishwasher is fine for the jars; especially if it has a "sanitize" cycle. Otherwise put the jars in boiling water for 10 minutes. I just put the lids in a small pot of almost boiling water for 5 minutes, and use the magnetic "lid lifter wand" (available from target, other big box stores, and often grocery stores; and available online - see this page) to pull them out.



Get the canner heating up

Rinse out your canner, put the rack in the bottom, and fill it with hot tap water. (Of course, follow the instruction that came with the canner, if they are different). Put it on the stove over low heat just to get it heating up for later on.



Step 12 - Heat and prepare to can!

Heat the watermelon rind in syrup by bringing it to a boil. As soon as a boil is reached, turn down the heat to cook slowly for 1 hour.



Step 13 - Packing the watermelon rind in the canning jars

This is called "hot packing"! Fill the jars loosely, but be sure to leave $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch of space at the TOP of the jar. That is called "headspace" and is needed for expansion during heating in the water bath. To each jar add 1 piece of stick cinnamon from spice bag;



Step 14 - Pour boiling cooking liquid into each packed jar

Use a ladle or pyrex measuring cup to carefully fill each packed jar with the hot syrup solution, again allowing $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch headspace. The watermelon rind should be covered and there should still be 1/2 inch of airspace left in the top of each jar. Be careful not to burn yourself, (or anyone else - children should be kept back during this step!)

Remove air bubbles and adjust headspace if needed. Wipe rims of jars with a dampened clean paper towel; adjust two-piece metal canning lids.

Step 15 - Put the lids and rings on

Put the lids on each jar and seal them by putting a ring on and screwing it down snugly (but not with all your might, just "snug").

Step 16 - Put the jars in the canner and the lid on the canner

Using the jar tongs, put the jars on the rack in the canner. Make sure the tops of the jars are covered by at least 1 inch of water.



Step 17 - Process for 10 minutes*

The chart below will help you determine the right processing time and pressure, if you have a different type of canner, or are above sea level. **For most people, using a plain open water bath canner, the time will be 10 minutes.**

Process according to the recommendations below. Let cool, undisturbed, 12-24 hours and check for seals.

Recommended process time for Watermelon Rind Pickles in a boiling-water (open, non-pressurized) canner.

		Process Time at Altitudes of		
Style of Pack	Jar Size	0 - 1,000 ft	1,001 - 6,000 ft	Above 6,000 ft
Hot	Pints	10 min	15	20

Step 18 - Remove the jars



Lift the jars out of the water and let them cool on a wooden cutting board or a towel, without touching or bumping them in a draft-free place (usually takes overnight), here they won't be bumped. You can then remove the rings if you like, but if you leave them on, at least loosen them quite a bit, so they don't rust in place due to trapped moisture. Once the jars are cool, you can check that they are sealed verifying that the lid has been sucked down. Just press in the center, gently, with your finger. If it pops up and down (often making a popping sound), it is not sealed. If you put the jar in the refrigerator right away, you can still use it. Some

people replace the lid and reprocess the jar, then that's a bit iffy. If you heat the contents back up, re-jar them (with a new lid) and the full time in the canner, it's usually ok. You're done!

Other Equipment:

From left to right:

1. Jar lifting tongs to pick up hot jars
2. Lid lifter - to remove lids from the pot of boiling water (sterilizing)
3. Lid - disposable - you may only use them once
4. Ring - holds the lids on the jar until after the jars cool - then you don't need them.
5. Canning jar funnel - to fill the jars and keep the rims clean.

