

RECIPES FOR LATE SUMMER

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Here are recipes for 3 chutneys that I have made recently. Also, Woolley's recipe for Damson Tarts as served at our seventeenth century meal, and screenings of our film "Quince, Venison and Peas".

"The word (chutney) comes from the Hindustani "chatni" meaning a strong sweet relish" (David and Rose Mabey 1975). They also say that it was in the last part of the seventeenth century that ketchup and chutneys were brought to England through the increased trade with the Orient carried on by the East India Company. These mixtures of fruit, vegetables, vinegar and sugar have been an important part of many English meals for over 3 centuries. They may have been introduced from the East but they have become part of our heritage - part of our history that's worth preserving.

When preparing chutneys I sterilise the jars in the oven as with jam.

They should be kept, preferably in the dark, for 3 months. They will be ready for Christmas and the "hungry gap" in the New Year.

Rhubarb Chutney

If you have rhubarb in your garden and no longer want it as a dessert what about rhubarb chutney. I made this recipe early in the summer and again recently. It comes from Mary Norwak's (1986) "Larkrise Recipes" We served it with vegetarian sausage rolls at the Rook Lane Teas during the festival. Customers were putting a dollop on their savoury scones also. It went down well.

2lb rhubarb
8oz onions
1lb 8 oz dark brown sugar
8 oz sultanas
1 pt vinegar
½ oz mustard powder
1 teasp gr mixed spice
1 teasp gr ginger
1 teasp salt
pinch gr cayenne pepper

Wipe rhubarb and cut into small pieces

Chop onions

Put all ingredients into a pan

Simmer until golden and thick, stirring occasionally

Put into jars and seal

A friend has given me windfall apples. This is what I did with them.

Apple and Orange chutney (White, Patricia H 1982 "Food as Presents" page 44)

2 oranges sliced and seeded
4 lbs apples cored and chopped
1 lb sultanas
level teasp ground cloves
level teasp ground nutmeg
1 lb onions peeled and roughly chopped
2 lbs sugar
1 ½ pts cider vinegar
8 oz chopped walnuts

Combine all ingredients except walnuts in a preserving pan
Cook covered over medium heat until apples are soft
Continue cooking uncovered until mixture thick and orange skin soft
Remove from heat
When cool enough put into food processor but keep some texture.
Bring back to the boil.
Remove from heat and stir in chopped walnuts and pot

Plum / Damson/ Greengage Chutney

(From Jane Grigson's Fruit Book 1982 page 362)

1 kg /2lbs stoned plums, damsons, greengages
250 g/8oz sliced apple
250g/8oz sliced onion
125/4oz raisins
125/4oz shredded carrot
250 g /8oz Demerara sugar
1 level table sp salt (?reduce)
level teasp ground cloves
level teasp gr ginger
level teasp ground allspice
1 small red dried chillie
600 ml / 1 pt white wine vinegar

Mix fruit, sugar, raisins carrot and onion in a basin
Put salt and spices in saucepan and pour on the vinegar
Bring slowly to the boil and add fruit etc
Bring back to boil slowly and simmer until thick
Pot and cover
Store for at least a month

Damson Tarts

I think the best thing to do with damsons is to make small tarts using this excellent recipe of Hannah Woolley - Seventeenth century cook. These were a great success when served for our Seventeenth century meal, which formed the basis of our film "Quince, Venison and Peas" More recently I served them with cooked ham at a picnic

Make small short crust pastry cases – these can be stored in a tin for a day or 2.
The filling can be made ahead and stored in the fridge.

Filling.

1lb/450 g damsons
1 tablespoon dark muscovado sugar
1 tablespoon double cream
10fl oz/300 ml red wine
2 teasp ginger
2 teasp cinnamon.

Halve and stone damsons and marinade in wine for at least 30 minutes. Drain and simmer damsons for 2/3 minutes. Add sugar, spices and cream. Cook gently until the mixture becomes a puree. Cool and fill the tart cases or refrigerate for later use.

This can be served as a sweet, with tea or with cold meat.

Notes - At first the filling may seem very gingery but it mellows over the next day or so.
I don't always drain the wine off as you can reduce it and get a fuller flavour.