

Cured Olives

Submitted by Sara Steiner

For more information on types and methods of curing olives, and recommended methods for canning, see UC Davis publication 8267: <https://anrcatalog.ucanr.edu/pdf/8267.pdf>

Directions

- Harvest green to rose colored olives, sort by size; remove leaves and stems. Avoid bruising. Rinse to clean olives.
- Lye Treatment: Note that household lye (potassium hydroxide, made from wood ash) is caustic, wear gloves and eye protection. It is easier to process olives if they are in a mesh “beer brewer’s” bag. Use only wood, glass, or ceramic crocks and utensils.
- For each gallon of water mix in ¼ cup 100% lye and 2 tablespoons salt (Ex. 3 gallons of water in a 5-gallon bucket, thoroughly dissolve ¾ cup lye and 6 tablespoons salt). Submerge loosely bagged olives. Keep covered in liquid with a light weight on top. Mix olives in solution periodically. Do not expose to air.
- Check olives after 12-24 hours depending on size. To test an olive, cut out a section and observe a dark staining line that should almost reach the pit. If not fully cured after 24 hours, change to fresh lye bath and test again every 8 hours. Do not expose olives to air.
- When fully cured, rinse olives with clean water twice a day for 5 days or until there is no heat to taste.
- After all presence of lye is gone, change liquid to a salt bath: Day 1 - 1/4 cup salt/gallon; Day 2 - 1/2 cup salt/gallon; Day 3 – ¾ cup salt/gallon – ready to can or; Day 4 – 1 cup salt/gallon to crock cure (very salty)
- To preserve: Salt brine-Bring to a boil 1 gallon of water and ¾ cup of salt plus several cloves of garlic. Strain out garlic before using.

