

Vinegars, Condiments and Chutneys
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UCCE El Dorado County Master Food Preservers

The whole family used to be terrified of the word “chutney.” Chutney, what is that? Sounds spicy, do not eat it! Actually, the National Center for Home Food Preservation says “The term ‘chutney’ includes several different varieties of sauce-type foods, drawn from traditional East Indian cuisine. The main ingredient may be an herb such as cilantro or mint; a flavoring ingredient such as coconut, onion, ginger, tamarind; or, in the most common form, chopped fruit or vegetables, simmered with spices, onion, sugar and vinegar.” Chutneys may, indeed, be very spicy, or these intriguing condiments may be very mild, depending upon the recipe.

To learn all about how to make and preserve chutney at home, along with how to combine ingredients for flavored vinegars and other condiments such as catsup and mustards, arrange to attend one of two free public education classes on the topics. The first class will be held at 311 Fair Lane in Placerville, on September 15th, and the repeat class will be at the Marshall Grange, 4940 Marshall Road in Garden Valley on September 18th. Both classes meet from 10:00 a.m. to noon, and include demonstrations and recipes from the Master Food Preservers of El Dorado County.

One of the prettiest and most practical gifts for Christmas remains a simple herb vinegar. Who would not appreciate a beautiful bottle of homemade vinegar that tastes fantastic? Look for unusual, unique bottles to show off this culinary addition. The MFPs’ instructions include admonishments to use only 5% vinegar for the base, and to avoid reactive containers. The Colorado State University Extension reminds us that “vinegars should retain good quality for two to three months in cool room storage and for six to eight months in refrigerated storage. If you notice any signs of mold or fermentation in...flavored vinegar, throw it away without tasting or using for any purpose.”

Now, do not be afraid of the chutneys. The MFPs provide recipes and demonstrations of chutney preparation to dispel any lingering fears. The family’s new favorite, Mango-Papaya Chutney, actually does have a bit of a bite, depending upon the number of jalapeños that have been added!

For questions about safe home food preservation, or to schedule a speaker for organizations or clubs on the topics of food safety or food preservation, call the Master Food Preservers at (530) 621-5506. For more information, be sure to go to the Master Food Preserver website at http://cecentralsierra.ucanr.org/Master_Food_Preservers/. Sign up to receive our new Master Food Preservers E-Newsletter at <http://ucanr.org/mfpnews/>.

Should assistance or special accommodations for any of these educational programs be required, please call (530) 621-5502.

