

It's March and you know what that means, right? I bet you thought I was going to say it's time to make sauerkraut. Well, it is, for sure, but nope. I have other ideas. We don't always need to go with the obvious. How about we make Fennel Relish? Yep, this one is different. It is really delicious, too.

Fennel is a bulb that has a slight licorice taste. However, it is very mild. I like to add it to mixed root vegetables and roast them, but I digress. Let's get back to the relish.

What the heck can we do with it? How about as a condiment on poached salmon? I have plans. For appetizers: make some sourdough rounds, brush lightly with olive oil and toast until slightly brown and crisp. Then put on a schmear of cream cheese, some poached salmon (gravlax would be awesome, too), and a dab of Fennel Relish. Or, a mixture of Fennel Relish and cream cheese stuffed into mushroom caps and baked. Another idea: make a nice salad, add some sliced oranges and sprinkle some Fennel Relish on top. Once your mind gets into it, there are all kinds of things to do with this unusual but delightful condiment.



Fennel Relish

source: Ball Complete Book of Home Preserving

Yield: five 8 oz. jars

1 large fennel bulb (or 2 medium), including the feathery leaves
½ cup brown sugar
2 Tbsp. ClearJel® (optional)
1 Tbsp. dry mustard
1 tsp salt
1 cup apple cider vinegar
½ cup water
2 ½ cups finely chopped onion
¼ cup drained pickled capers
1 tsp. lemon zest
1 tsp. fennel seeds
¼ tsp. cracked black pepper

Prepare canner, jars, and lids.

Remove feathery leaves from fennel and finely chop leaves to measure 2 Tbsp. Set aside. Remove stocks and core from the fennel bulb and discard. Pulse remainder of bulb in a blender or food processor fitted with a blade until finely chopped, but not pureed. Measure 3 cups firmly packed. Set aside.

In a large stainless steel saucepan, combine brown sugar, ClearJel[®], mustard, and salt. Add vinegar and water and whisk until dry ingredients dissolve. (Whisking prevents ClearJel[®] from clumping). Stir in onions, capers, lemon zest, fennel seeds, and black pepper. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat, stirring frequently. Reduce heat. Cover and boil gently for 4 minutes. Add reserved fennel leaves and chopped bulb. Return to a boil over medium-high heat. Remove from heat.

Ladle hot relish into hot jars, leaving ½ inch headspace. Remove bubbles. Add more relish if necessary. Wipe jar rim, Center lid onto jar, Screw bands until resistant is met, then increase to finger-tip tight.

Place jars in canner, ensuring they are completely covered with at least 1 inch of water. Bring to a boil and process for 10 minutes, adjusting for altitude, if needed. Remove canner lid. Wait 5 minutes, then remove jars, cool, label, and store.

Process in a boiling water bath for
10 minutes at 0-1000 ft
15 minutes at 1000-6000 ft.
20 minutes above 6000ft.

