

Transform juicy gooseberries into a tasty, tangy pickle mix

Big on flavour and with added health benefits, fermented foods offer the best of both worlds, and they're easier to make from scratch than you might think.

Food writer Rachel de Thample recommends serving these deliciously tart pickles – from her book, *Fermentation* – alongside mackerel, creamy ricotta or goat's cheese.

The 44-year-old, who started out as a TV news journalist before moving to the UK and making the switch to food writing and training as a chef, has penned *River Cottage Handbook No.18: Fermentation*, imparting all the knowledge she's garnered throughout the years.

Rachel is a fan of following an '80/20 approach to healthy eating, where 80% of the food you eat is "really nutrient dense, and then the 20% is the stuff that just gives you pleasure and joy and helps you be a sociable, happy being.

"You know, you don't want to be sitting on your own consuming fermented foods and nothing else," she says.

"It's all about the balance."



INGREDIENTS

Makes a 340g jar

- 200g green gooseberries
- 1-2 sprigs of dill, lemon verbena or your favourite garden herb
- 2 black peppercorns (optional)
- 6 coriander seeds (optional)
- A pinch of yellow mustard seeds (optional)
- 1 allspice berry, or a quarter tsp pickling spice (optional)
- 150ml filtered water
- 6g sea salt

You will also need: A 340g jar with an airtight lid, for fermentation plus a bottle or jar, for storage

Fermentation time is 1-2 weeks

METHOD

- 1 Pack the gooseberries into the jar with your chosen herb, and any spices you are using (all spices are optional).
- 2 Whisk the water and salt together until the salt is dissolved, to form a brine. Pour the brine over the



gooseberries, ensuring it comes right to the top of the jar. If you need a little more brine, whisk another 2g of sea salt with 50ml of water.

Seal the jar tightly.

3 Leave to ferment at room temperature for one to two weeks, or longer if you wish.

The longer you leave the pickle, the softer the berries will be; they will also be less salty.

4 Once you're happy with the texture and flavour, transfer to the fridge to arrest fermentation. The pickled gooseberries keep for a year but they're at their best eaten within three months.

River Cottage Handbook No.18: Fermentation by Rachel de Thample, is published by Bloomsbury Publishing, priced £16.99