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Russian Watermelon Pickles

Prepare the watermelon. Cut pieces the size and shape that suits you. Peel, or leave on the peel. The biggish wedges may stay crisper if you leave the skin on. They can be trimmed down before serving if you like. Place the watermelon pieces into your fermenting jar adding some allspice, bay leaves, black peppercorns, celery, dill and garlic as you go.

To make brine. Estimate how much brine you will require to cover your watermelon pieces. Dissolve salt into filtered water. You will need 18- 25g of salt per 500 mls of filtered water*

Make sure your watermelon pieces are submerged under the brine and close lid of your jar. For such a ferment it would not be necessary to use a jar with an airlock. Our Fermenting Hold 'em Downs or Viscodiscs work really well to hold the watermelon slices under the brine. Leave to ferment. By 24 hours you'll likely see some bubbles and maybe some frothy foam. In warm weather, it normally takes 2 or 4 days for the transformation to occur. Deciding when to move the batch to the fridge to slow down the pickling process is a matter of taste.

Russian watermelon pickles should be served icy cold. Dip them from the brine right before serving so they're plump and juicy, or serve from a bowl along with some brine. Pickles will keep for a month or two. After a week or 10 days their crunch factor diminishes and texture becomes softer and denser, at the same time, flavour becomes more complex. Finding the balance between the texture that suits and the flavour you like is a matter of personal taste. When planning to serve watermelon pickles for a specific meal it is recommended to start a batch 3 to 5 days ahead so they can be chilled a day or two.

Don't throw away the brine from this ferment – it is delicious to drink.

*If you plan to keep your watermelon pickles in the fridge for some time the higher amount of salt (ie. 5% brine) is recommended. If you will consume within days you may prefer to use slightly less salt (i.e. 3.5% brine).

