

BRINING OLIVES

Congratulations, you have olives! Now what to do?

Please don't try to eat them fresh from the tree; they are really, really bitter.

One option is to cure them by brining them; a simple process outlined below.

- Select only olives free of flaws. To paraphrase an old adage, "one spoiled olive ruins the batch".
- Make a solution by mixing 1.5 cups of Kosher or sea salt (without iodine) to one gallon of water. The old fashioned method is to put a raw egg in the shell, in the bottom of a container of water.
- Pour in salt until the egg floats to the top.
- Place the olives in a glass or ceramic container. Cover the olives with the above mixture.
- Weight the olives down with one-gallon Ziploc bags filled with the same brine solution to keep them submerged in the brining solution.
- Store the olives in a cool place, about 65-72 degrees.
- In approximately 6 weeks, test the olives by tasting one. The olives should no longer taste bitter. If they do, keep them in the brine a few weeks longer. For the more technically inclined, when the PH meter reads 4.6, the olives are ready.
- If you think the olives are too salty, pour off the brine, then cover them with cool water and soak for several hours. Drain, cover with fresh water. Store in the refrigerator. Your olives are now ready to eat.

Serving suggestions

Place the cured olives in a bowl of olive oil (Sandy Oaks Extra Virgin Olive Oil is a good choice). Add peppercorns, garlic cloves, fresh herbs, or any citrus peel. Let olives marinate for a few hours to infuse them with these flavors.