

Extension

Seasonal Eating
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Relishing the Fall
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Fall – ahh – a breath of fresh, cool, dry air. A welcome relief after the heat of summer. The gardens are winding down from the summer crops and cool season vegetables are taking over while the fall fruits ripen. It is the perfect time for relishes.

I was down at the Lincoln County Fair judging the other day and was admiring all the different jars of relish. Pickle relishes are the standard nationally but here in the South we like our chow-chow (piccalilli), squash relish, corn relish, onion relish, green tomato relish and pepper relish as well. If you can name a vegetable, we can make a relish out of it. We even use fruits, like pears, apples and peaches, in some relishes.

The dictionary definition of a relish is: a seasoned sauce that is used to add flavor to other foods and that is made of chopped fruit or vegetables. Typically a relish contains vinegar and can be sweet with the addition of sugar or spicy with the addition of hot peppers. From there, the possibilities are endless. It seems that there is no definitive recipe for each relish – they vary greatly. So try several to see what your family likes the best. The one exception to this experimentation is when you are canning relish. It is very important that the proportions of vegetables, liquids and acids are correct in order to make it safe for room temperature storage. If you want to can relish make sure you use a lab tested recipe from sources like USDA or Extension.

Maybe one reason we like our relishes so much is that we are bean eaters. Pinto beans with a dab of chow-chow is a heaven sent meal of comfort. Our Southern Fried Catfish just calls out for a relish to cut the grease. We also love our tailgates and football parties in the fall and a grilled sausage with relish and mustard is a standard. Relishes can be used in many other ways too. Try a corn relish on fish tacos. Mix pickle relish into tuna, egg or pasta salads. Dab a little pepper relish on your western omelet. Top a steak with onion relish. Mix a little hot relish into your meatloaf. Relishes are also great toppers for pork or chicken.

This week, I made a great dish for fall – Pecan Crusted Pork Tenderloin with Pear Relish. The sweet/tart flavor of the relish is the perfect contrast to the nutty, rich flavor of the pork medallions. Pears will soon be everywhere and this is a great way to use them up. Bell peppers and onions combine with the pears in a vinegar and sugar syrup spiced with pickling mix and turmeric. This is not spicy, just very flavorful. Be sure to chop your vegetables and pears finely. My pears were diced to about 1/4 – 3/8 inch. The pickling spices contain whole peppercorns so be sure to strain them out or tie them up in cheesecloth so you can remove them.

So give some relishes a try and perk up your dishes with a splash of acidity this fall.



Check out the UT Extension Seasonal Eating Blog (<https://extension.tennessee.edu/Bedford/seasonaleatingblog/default.aspx>) for recipes using local farmer's market produce. The Seasonal Eating Cooking Demonstration on "Relish the Fall" will be held on September 17 at 12:00 noon at the Extension Office. Call the Office at 684-5971 to sign up and bring \$7.00 to class to cover the samples.

Pecan Crusted Pork Tenderloin with Pear Relish

1/2 cup + 2 tablespoons cider vinegar
1/2 cup sugar
3/4 teaspoon salt
3/4 teaspoon pickling spice
3/4 teaspoon ground turmeric
3/4 medium onion, finely chopped
1/4 red bell pepper, finely chopped
1/4 green bell pepper, finely chopped
5 firm pears, cored and finely chopped
1 pork tenderloin
1/2 cup flour
1 egg beaten with 1 tablespoon water
1 1/2 cups chopped pecans
Vegetable oil

In a large saucepan combine vinegar, sugar, salt, pickling spices and turmeric. Bring to a boil and then simmer until syrupy, about 10 minutes. Strain to remove the whole pickling spices and return syrup to pan. Add onion, peppers and pears and bring back to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer for 30 minutes or so until pears and vegetables get tender, flavors meld together and juices reduce. Let cool slightly while making the pork. Trim the silverskin and excess fat from the tenderloin. Cut crosswise into 1/2" thick slices. Press lightly to spread out. Sprinkle with salt and pepper. Coat with flour, then dip into egg and then coat with nuts. Heat about 1/4" of oil in a large skillet over medium high heat. Add the coated pork slices. Reduce heat to medium and cook until browned and pork is cooked through turning once, about 5-7 minutes on a side. Place on serving dish and top with pear relish.