

my green life  
**the pickle guy**

Rick Field's obsession goes well beyond his cult brand, Rick's Picks. Here, the brine master highlights the many virtues of preserving nature's bounty.

**his bread and butter** My family was always canning in the summers. Craving the pickles of my youth, I began making my own, using Brooklyn green-market produce. Now we sell 11 varieties—from beets to okra and, of course, cucumbers. I'm really proud of our mail-order packaging, which eliminates the need for Styrofoam peanuts and bubble wrap. **FROM \$9.99 EACH, RICKSPICKSNYC.COM**



**for the sweet tooth** June Taylor gives heirloom fruit a longer life in her outrageously delicious marmalades. Everything is organic and sustainably grown, and the jelly is cooked in small batches—even the letterpress labels are applied by hand. *Meyer lemon marmalade* **\$12 (\$25 MINIMUM), JUNETAYLORJAMS.COM**

**cousin in condiments** Massachusetts-based Real Pickles employs lacto-fermentation (naturally occurring cultures yield lactic acid, which acts as a preservative). It teams exclusively with nearby farmers, and the results are delicious—check out the ginger carrots and red cabbage. **\$36/ANY FOUR JARS (AVAILABLE ONLY IN THE NORTHEAST U.S.), REALPICKLES.COM**



**a juicy read** Lucy Norris' book is chockful of mouthwatering recipes—some taking only 24 hours to achieve picklehood—but it's also a fascinating survey of traditions, from Louisiana to Poland to Japan. *"Pickled: Preserving a World of Tastes and Traditions"* **\$15.30 AMAZON.COM**



**killer kraut** Also lacto-fermented, this spicy cabbage hails from one of my favorite farms. Just last night, I mixed it with green-market potatoes and garlic sausage—it's like a Brooklynized Austrian choucroute. *Jalapeno sauerkraut* **\$5 (12-JAR MINIMUM), HAWTHORNEVALLEYFARM.ORG FOR INFORMATION**



**a homegrown cocktail**

My brother Jonathan and I have discovered a fabulous use for the nasturtiums at our family's house in Vermont. We grab 100 or so blossoms, put them in a quart jar, pour in vodka and wait a month. The vodka develops this amazing peppery flavor.



**diy kit** A one-stop shop for the neophyte. You get all the basics—a processing pot, Mason jars, a jar lifter (you'll know why this is necessary once you begin)—plus a recipe book. *Ball home-canning kit* **\$39.99 GOODMANS.NET**



**a short history of pickling**

**c. 2400 B.C.** Archaeologists believe that ancient Mesopotamians developed the craft.

**c. 51 B.C.** Sources suggest that Cleopatra attributed her good looks to a steady diet of pickles.

**1490s** Christopher Columbus brings the sour snack to the New World.

**1611** Earliest recorded use of the word *pickle* as a metaphor, in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*.

**early 1900s** More than 100 merchants hock vinegary cukes on Manhattan's Lower East Side.

**today** Rick's Picks, also based on the Lower East Side, carries the standard into the 21st century.

**RICK'S TRICKS**

How to use my Mean Beans in the greenest way possible:

1. Get your hands on a jar. Open and begin eating the beans.
2. Wrap some beans in sliced hard salami for a festive hors d'oeuvre.
3. Add a couple of beans and a dash of the brine to your Bloody Mary.
4. When the beans are gone, take thinly sliced carrots or daikon and place them in the jar with the remaining liquid. Refrigerate for four days and you'll have yummy, zesty veggies!
5. When your improvised pickles are finished, wash the jar to create a commemorative drinking glass or a miniature flowerpot.
6. Rinse the lid and flip it to create a tidy receptacle for pushpins and paper clips.

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