



Preserve Today, Relish Tomorrow

UCCE Master Food Preservers of El Dorado County

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Cinnamon Kumquats



“How about a kumquat, my little chickadee?” (W.C. Fields, *My Little Chickadee*, 1940)
Say what? Yes, I said kumquats. Those adorable little kumquats. You know, those “things” that you have been so curious about.

Another idea for using citrus that is not a marmalade. *Vive la différence!* That said, a kumquat marmalade is nothing short of marvelous. Honestly.

“A kumquat is not an orange though it wants to be one, especially when they’re around other kumquats. (W.C. Fields, *It’s A Gift*, 1934)

Kumquats are native to China, and their name comes from the Cantonese *kam kwat*, which means “golden orange.” They are a symbol of prosperity and a traditional gift at Lunar New Year.

Unlike other citrus, kumquats are eaten whole, including the skin. They have a tart-bitter-sweet taste that is boldly refreshing. Ya gotta try one. Really. Just pop one in your mouth and go for it.

Fresh kumquats are wonderful in salads and in savory dishes. They are also great in chutneys and relishes. We canned them in a sweet cinnamon syrup. They can then be eaten right out of the jar like candy or used in desserts such as pound cakes or cheesecakes. The syrup is wonderful for drizzles, too. Savory ideas: use them in salads (use the syrup in your dressing!), they would be perfect with ham, maybe as a glaze for chicken wings (I would add some hot sauce, too).

CINNAMON KUMQUATS

Source: Ball Complete Book of Home Preserving

Yield: about six 8 ounce jars or 3 pint jars

2 ½ lbs kumquats, stems removed, outside brushed and rinsed clean

2 Tblsp. baking soda

Boiling water

2 cinnamon sticks (4 inches long tied in a cheesecloth)

6 cups granulated sugar

In a large stainless steel saucepan, combine kumquats and baking soda. Add boiling water to cover and set aside for 5 minutes. Transfer to a colander placed over a sink and drain thoroughly. Rinse three times in cold running water.

Remove any small stems from fruit. Prick each kumquat twice with a toothpick to prevent bursting.

In a large clean stainless steel saucepan, combine kumquats, 8 cups water and cinnamon sticks. Bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce heat to low and heat gently for 7 minutes. (Be careful not to boil, as boiling may cause the fruit to burst). Add sugar and cook over medium-low heat, stirring constantly but gently, until sugar has dissolved and liquid has almost returned to a boil. Discard cinnamon sticks.

Prepare canner, jars, and lids.

Using a slotted spoon, pack kumquats loosely into hot jars to within a generous ½ inch of top of jar. Ladle hot syrup into jar to cover kumquats, leaving ½ inch headspace. Remove air bubbles and adjust headspace, if necessary, by adding hot syrup. Wipe rim clean with a damp paper towel or cloth. Center lid on jar. Screw band down until resistance is met, then increase to fingertip-tight.

Place jars in canner, ensuring they are completely covered with water at least 1" of water. Bring to a boil and process both 8 oz and pint jars 15 minutes. Turn off heat and remove canner lid. Let sit 5 minutes. Then remove jars, cool completely. Once cool, remove the rings and clean the jars to remove all sticky residue. Label with the name of the product and the date. Store in a cool, dark place.

Variation: Minted Kumquats: Replace the 2 cinnamon sticks with 1 cup fresh mint and stems, tied tightly with string (or in a cheesecloth bag). When packing kumquats, place a fresh mint leaf in each jar.

Tips: For best results, use small firm, oval-shaped kumquats. Large kumquats do not hold their shape as well. Scrub with a soft brush under running water and drain well before using. This amount of fruit in the recipe can be doubled without doubling the amount of syrup. We put a small bit of cinnamon stick in each jar.