

What's Cookin': Tips to use up the aging condiments in your fridge

Gerry is writing today...

Is there any real food in your refrigerator, or like most fridges, at least two shelves and a door are filled with condiments? Condiments, meaning anything such as a prepared sauce, chutney, mustard, anchovy paste, capers, mayonnaise and more! Then, when we have used them once or twice for a specific recipe, these jars and bottles can sit there for years.

I am going to make an effort this winter to use up or throw out most of these. My grandkids often make fun of this special collection I have, so I know it's time to do something about it. Here's a partial list of what's in there (then I'll give you some suggestions on how to incorporate some condiments into recipes).

Yellow mustard, Dijon, grainy mustard, green mustard, honeydip mustard, mayonnaise, garlic mayonnaise, horseradish, capers, chili sauce, red pepper jelly, sundried tomatoes, five kinds of pickles and olives, two salad dressings, relish, barbecue sauce, ketchup, maple syrup, jam, marmalade, part bottle of white wine, roasted red peppers, pickled beets, miso paste, sour cream, pickled ginger, hot sauce and so on and so on. Of course your fridge will have its own special treats!

Salad dressings would be an obvious choice for many of these items, how about marinating your meats in a salad dressing (not a creamy one)

Lori Gysel & Gerry Kentner



or incorporate a salad dressing into a pasta sauce?

Add cooked chicken, broccoli and pasta to Asian sesame dressing and soy sauce. Try chopping sundried to-

matoes and garlic over salmon filets with a drizzle of olive oil and fresh basil. Any mustard makes a great rub over most meats, then sprinkle liberally with some dried or fresh herbs (rosemary for lamb, thyme for pork, garlic for beef).

Deglaze the pan after cooking chicken breasts, pork chops or steaks with red or white wine. Saute some shallots or onions, add Dijon, some fresh rosemary or thyme, some cream and a touch of butter.

Relish, mayonnaise, capers, pickles,

lemon and ketchup can be turned into a remoulade to serve with seafood. Slice your pickled beets with some red onion slivers and fresh dill to serve as a side. Top with a dollop of sour cream. Try making a glaze with any mustard, marmalade and maple syrup for any pork product.

And as for the 15 used margarine tubs filled with mystery food— don't go there! Have fun and keep cooking!

Email questions and comments to whatscookin@independentfreepress.com

Parsnip and Pear Soup

Serves 8

Ingredients

- 2 large parsnips, peeled and chopped
- 1 large Spanish onion, chopped
- 3 small ripe pears, peeled, cored and chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, whole
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 4-6 cups vegetable stock
- 1 tsp dried thyme
- 1/2 cup 35% cream
- Salt and pepper to taste

Method

1. Combine parsnips, onion, pears and garlic in a large bowl. Add olive oil and toss to coat.
2. On a baking sheet (or two) lined

with parchment, spread vegetable mixture so that they are in a thin layer. Do not mound them up.

3. Bake in a preheated 400 degree oven for approximately 20-40 minutes. Toss part way through cooking. They are done when they are golden brown and very soft. The length of cooking time will depend on how large the pieces of vegetables are.

4. Transfer vegetables to a large pot. Add 4 cups of vegetable stock and thyme. Bring to a boil, then turn heat off.

5. With an immersion blender, puree the soup. Add the cream. You may now add more vegetable stock, if necessary, to bring soup to desired consistency. Once soup is at proper thickness, add salt and pepper to taste.



Optional garnish: Slice another pear, lengthwise so that you can see the heart of the pear. Make the slices quite thin— you can use a mandolin if you like. In a frying pan with olive oil, fry the pear slices until well golden in colour. Season with salt and pepper. Drain on paper towels. Use as garnish for the soup.

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