

Preschool-aged Activities

Pickles, Pickles, I Like Pickles

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1. There are a variety of food items that can be “pickled”. Discuss that “pickling” is a way for people to get some foods to last longer. Sometimes people “pickle” items by putting them in a jar of vinegar and other spices. Most people in the United States think of pickled cucumbers as “pickles”.
2. Since people “pickle” items to get them to last longer, try an experiment together that shows this concept. Cut up a cucumber into multiple pieces. Place a couple of pieces in each of the following places: 1. on a small plate on the counter (or somewhere exposed) 2. in a small container in the refrigerator (covered) 3. in a small container in the refrigerator (uncovered) 4. in a small covered jar with vinegar covering the cucumber slices (placed in the refrigerator) 5. in a small covered jar with vinegar covering the cucumber slices (on the counter). Come up with ideas of what will happen to the cucumber slices in each of the locations. Each day, check on the cucumber slices and see what happens. Are there any differences?
3. Since cucumbers aren’t the only food items that can be “pickled”, visit a grocery store and count the number of pickled items you can find. If adventurous, buy a unique pickled item to taste test.
4. Create a collage of food items that are pickled such as cucumbers, green beans, beets, eggs, pears, peppers, blueberries, watermelon rinds, and more. (If you can’t find enough pictures in magazines for the child to cut out, find pictures online to print or have the child draw their own pictures.)
5. Cucumbers are often used to make what people in the United States know as “pickles”. Look at a variety of cucumbers. Talk about the textures of them - smooth vs. bumpy. Then, taste test a couple of different kinds of cucumbers.
6. Cucumbers grow on vines. Create a display together that shows some foods that grow on vines (cucumbers, grapes, watermelon, etc.), some foods that grow on trees (apples, oranges, lemons, etc.), and some foods that grow underground (peanuts, potatoes, carrots, etc.).
7. Paint with cucumbers - Cut 2 cucumbers in half (each in a different direction so that you have two different shaped “cucumber stamps”). Then, dip the exposed interior of the cucumbers in paint and stamp them on to a piece of paper. See what kind of textures you get on the paper. Can you see the seeds in the painting?
8. A lot of people think that cucumbers are vegetables, but they are technically fruits since their seeds are inside of them. Create a chart of vegetables vs. fruits.
9. There are quite a few pickle-themed or pickle-flavored items available for purchase such as pickle-shaped erasers and pickle-flavored chips. Have the child create and draw a picture of his/her own made-up pickle-shaped or pickle-flavored item.
10. Buy a small jar of pickles. Guess how many pickles are in the pickle jar. Then, (prepare to get sticky) open the jar and count the pickles to see how close the guesses were.

11. The word PICKLES in the book *Pickles, Pickles, I Like Pickles* was created by taking pictures of real pickles laid out as letters. Create your own letters (and small words) using pickles. If you don't want to get sticky (or use up your pickles), use some other item to create various letters such as toothpicks, bendable straws, q-tips, pens/pencils, blocks, yarn, etc.
12. Taste test a variety of pickles- dill, bread and butter, etc. Have each person choose his or her favorite. Create a chart to see which pickle variety is the most favored.
13. The various kinds of pickles are created based on the spices or seasonings that are used. Smell, see, feel, and possibly taste a variety of seasonings or spices that can be used to make pickles.
14. Create a "pickle face". Using green construction paper, draw and cut out a large pickle. Then, add eyes, nose, mouth, ears, and possibly hands to the "pickle face". As each of the parts is added, discuss the sense that goes with it (eyes-see, nose-smell, etc.).
15. Pickles may come in a variety of shapes since they may be whole, speared, or sliced. Talk about different shapes that you can see in the room you are in. Try to find one item for each of the following shapes: circle, square, rectangle, triangle, diamond, oval, etc.
16. Watch Magic School Bus: In a Pickle.
17. In *Pickles, Pickles, I Like Pickles*, the cucumbers that were turned into pickles were grown in a garden. If possible, grow your own cucumber plants in a garden. Otherwise, place a seed in a resealable bag and watch it grow.
18. After reading the book, talk about the steps it took to make the pickles from seed to finish. Possibly, put them into order: planted seeds, watered the garden, picked weeds, plants grew, flowers bloomed, cucumbers grew from small to big enough to pick, picked the cucumbers, washed the cucumbers, mom cut the cucumbers, placed the cucumbers in jars with spices and vinegar, kept the jars in the refrigerator, tasted a pickle.
19. Make your own refrigerator pickles.
20. Cucumbers are green. Go on a scavenger hunt for as many green items as you can find within a certain amount of time.
21. Find and cut out the letters P-I-C-K-L-E-S from a variety of magazines and glue them on to a piece of paper.
22. Play "hot cucumber". Play some music while passing a cucumber around for a short amount of time. Then, stop the music. The person who is holding the cucumber when the music stops is out. Play continues until only one person is left.
23. Sometimes people may say a person may be "in a pickle" or "as cool as a cucumber". Talk about what these and other food related phrases mean. Some examples include "go bananas", "in a jam", "piece of cake", and "don't spill the beans".
24. Color the coloring pages that go along with the book.
25. The author of *Pickles, Pickles, I Like Pickles* has a family tradition of placing a pickle shaped ornament on a Christmas tree for her daughters to find on Christmas. Look up Christmas traditions around the world. Otherwise, discuss what traditions are and what traditions your family may have - they don't have to be holiday related.