

MỨT TẮC PRESERVED KUMQUATS, VIETNAMESE CANDIED KUMQUATS,



Mứt Tắc (Candied Kumquats), are commonly made during the Vietnamese Lunar New Year; lending their sweetness and bright happy color, their flower shape symbolize good luck and prosperity.

Parting from the New Years tradition, I decided to make this delightful recipe just a few weeks ago. The kumquat harvest in California was so bountiful this year, I put up 20 jars of *kumquat jelly*, and still had enough fruit to make the tiny morsels. Served with a hot cup of tea, they're packed with a delicious sweet, citrus flavor, and offer up a big dose of vitamin C in every bite. Their tart, citrus flavor also lends itself to more savory dishes featuring pork, and duck as well as, their syrupy juice, to flavor cocktails, and tossed into salads as

a chewy, sweet bite.

I've adapted the Mứt Tắc (Candied Kumquats) recipe from two sources, *Spices of Life* and *The Kitchen*. Both recipes are time-consuming but *The Kitchen* uses fewer steps in their version. I've followed the pickling steps from *Spices of Life*, as I'm familiar with preserving with *Mrs. Wages Pickling Lime*, and it's the more traditional method of preparation; the result is well worth the effort.



Kumquat are native to South-Eastern China but grown in many parts of the world. These varieties are most commonly grown for their fruit: Marumi kumquat, is known for its pleasant flavor and round. The Nagami kumquat (featured in this recipe) is more oval-shaped and the most common variety grown inside the United States. The Meiwa kumquat

is round, and larger than the other varieties.
Surprisingly, the skin is packed with sweetness, so eating
the entire fruit is recommended.



Mứt Tắc (Candied Kumquats)

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Yields 8

Vietnamese Candied Kumquats

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Prep Time

30 min

Cook Time

1 hr

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30 min

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1 hr

Ingredients

1. 9 cups kumquats
2. 3 cups sugar
3. 1 tablespoon pickling lime (Mrs. Wages)
4. 1/4 cup bottled lemon juice
5. 12 cups water
6. 1 teaspoon salt

Instructions

1. In a large colander, rinse kumquats in cold water
2. In another bowl combine 6 cups water with 1 tablespoon Mrs Wages Pickling Lime
3. Place kumquats in a large pickle jug or bowl, pour pickling lime liquid over fruit and toss with a large spoon, cover and rest at room temperature for up to 4 hours or overnight
4. Scoop whole fruit out from the pickling liquid into colander, and rinse in cold water

5. Using a sharp pairing knife, slice 6-8 eyelets into the sides of kumquats making sure to leave the top and bottom of fruit intact.
6. Remove as many seeds as possible by gently squeezing the cut fruit, a toothpick or sharp object is useful when trying to fish out the seeds however, don't worry if you don't get all the seeds out, they will loosen up during the cooking process.
7. Add salt to leftover pickling liquid, stir to combine
8. Return cut fruit to the pickling liquid, add more water to cover fruit, cover with plastic wrap and rest overnight at room temperature

Finally

1. Remove fruit from pickling liquid, and discard liquid, gently toss fruit under cold water and rinse for 3-5 minutes
2. In a large stock pot combine sugar, bottled lemon juice and fruit, heat to medium high, stirring until sugar dissolves, bring to a boil, stirring occasionally
3. Reduce heat to medium and cook until liquid is almost absorbed, takes 45 - 50 minutes.
4. Remove individual fruit to a parchment lined cookie sheet, press the tops of the fruit with your finger until they resemble a flower shape, allow them to rest and air dry for up to 24 hours
5. Keep fruit in canning jars or covered container for up to 3 months in the refrigerator

Notes

1. Syrup can be pour over fruit and stored in jars to create a softer version.

By Rebecka Evans

Adapted from *The Spices of Life*

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