

Cat Fish Egg Pickle

Cat fish constitute one of the important fisheries of India. It forms a good fishery all along the coast-line throughout the fishing season. About 8 different species of cat fish such as *Tachysurus dussumieri*, *T. tenuispinis*, *Osteogeneiosus militaris* etc. are landed along this coast. It is an unpopular variety of fish, fetching very low price in our markets, due to its unattractive appearance and peculiar smell. Big size cat fishes are not marketed as whole in this region. It is beheaded and the body meat, head and ovaries are sold separately. Cat fish eggs are not in much demand and are mainly consumed by the local poor population by boiling the eggs in saltwater and making curry out of it. Cat fish eggs are available in plenty from January to March. Attempts were made for the better utilization of eggs. Canning of cat fish eggs was tried in different media as brine, groundnut oil and tomato juice. It was observed that on blanching and heat processing eggs become hard and dry. The final canned product was very tough in texture and was not relished. So trials were made to utilize this characteristic toughness to make a favourable product such as pickle. Pickling of eggs showed promising results as it make the eggs comparatively softer and juicy, on ageing. Hence, production of pickle from cat fish eggs was found to be the best and economical. This can be easily taken up on commercial basis by rural people as it does not involve much investment. This product will have a good internal market. The method of pickle production adopted was essentially the same as followed for making clam meat pickle (Vijayan *et al.* 1982) and green mussel pickle (Muraleedharan *et al.* 1982) with slight modification.

Ingredients required

Cat fish eggs (Blanched), kg.	1
Mustard, g	15
Green chillies, g	50
Garlic, g	50

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Ginger, g	50
Chilly powder, g	35
Turmeric powder, g	3
Salt (dissolved in 100 ml water), g	75
Vinegar, ml	225
Groundnut oil, g	250

Cat fish ovaries were collected from local fish market and eggs were separated out and washed in clean water. The eggs were blanched in 5% boiling brine for 7 min. The cooked eggs were drained, cooled and then fried in groundnut oil to light brown colour. Mustard seeds, sliced green chillies, crushed garlic and sliced ginger were fried separately in the oil. When it was nearly brown in colour, chilly powder and turmeric powder was added and mixed well. The salt solution was added to this and brought to boil. Fried eggs were then added and thoroughly mixed. The pan was removed from the fire. After cooling, vinegar was added and mixed well. The pickle was filled in clean dry bottles. A layer of previously heated and cooled groundnut oil was overlaid as a protective layer to prevent the exposure of the eggs. Bottles were then tightly closed and stored at room temperature. The pickle should be stored for one month for proper maturation so that penetration of spices will make the eggs soft and juicy. The matured pickle had a good taste and aroma and could be kept for a period of 8 months in a fair and acceptable condition.

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References

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