
CARAMELISED ONION CHUTNEY

Brilliant with cheese or ham

Here in Italy, it's quite normal for people to eat jam and honey with cheese. Whilst we like it, we prefer something a bit sharper – too many years of Branston Pickle, I suppose. So I've been making some chutneys – notably a lovely spicy plum chutney. But the other day we actually had this delicious black sticky stuff with our cheese, and it turned out to be onion chutney. So I've combined a few different recipes that I found and came up with this one. I hope you like it!

INGREDIENTS

7 medium red onions
2 medium shallots
1 medium white onion
270 ml balsamic vinegar
50 ml red wine vinegar
220 g brown sugar
2 short sticks cinnamon
2 bay leaves (fresh)
1 large sprig rosemary
2 sprigs thyme
3 tbsp olive oil
1 large pinch salt

INSTRUCTIONS

Peel the onions, slice in half from top to bottom and then slice quite thinly. You can make it more chunky if you like but this gives a lovely relish that is very easy to add in small quantities to your cheese (and it's quite strong, so you won't want a lot!).

Heat the olive oil in a wide deep pan - a sauté pan is perfect. When the oil is hot, add the onions, shallots, herbs and spices and a large pinch of salt.

Cook very very slowly over a low heat. The onions will become soft and then eventually will start to turn brown. When they reach this stage stir them reasonably often to ensure they don't burn.

When you have caramelised the onions (this can take up to an hour or more) add the vinegars and sugar. Simmer over a low heat without a lid. The mixture will become thick after about 30 minutes or so.

Spoon into sterilised jars and leave - ideally for a few weeks - to let the flavours develop.