

## Sweet and Salty

**(Story words: salt, salty, refrigerator, sugar, slices, sliced)**

Margo was feeling that her eating habits were in a rut. When she was stressed and had a lot to do, it was so easy to open a bag of chips or crackers and munch on snacks that were not the best for her and not even very tasty.

Margo knew that she loved things with a lot of taste—salty things, sweet things, and things that were both sweet and salty. She remembered when she used to make her own pickles and how good they were.

The pickles that are sold in the supermarket have been fermented and sealed in jars so that they can be shelf stable for years. Margo's pickles were not that type. They were called "refrigerator pickles." The method was simple. She would make a brine in a pot on the stove by combining salt, vinegar, and water. Then, she would pour

the brine over thin slices of cucumbers, radishes, carrots, or whatever she wanted to pickle. Sometimes, she made a sweet brine with sugar rather than salt. She liked a sweet brine when she pickled beets and radishes and a salty brine when she pickled cucumbers.

This afternoon Margo wanted to make pickled beets in a sweet brine, so she stopped at the store to get supplies. The formula for a sweet brine was easy for her to remember. After cooking the beets in water for about thirty minutes, she took the beets out of the pot to cool. She saved one cup of the water—which was now a deep reddish purple. The brine was one part sugar, two parts vinegar, and three parts water. Thus, she would put one-third cup of sugar, two-thirds cup of vinegar, and one whole cup of beet water into a pot to simmer.

Then, she peeled and sliced the beets and put them in a big wide mouth jar. She poured the brine over them and put them in the refrigerator for a day or two to absorb the taste. They would stay fresh in her refrigerator for weeks.

Margo liked to grind salt on her beets just before eating them. She loved that sweet, tangy, salty taste.