

Spring Quick Pickles (Refrigerator Pickles)

Funky Fridays: We're all about keeping it funky, especially when the seasons flip from one to the other. Quick refrigerator pickles let you savor the winter produce that's on its way out (such as romanesco) and preserve tender new crops (radishes!) in a spiced brine. By heating the brine for a short period of time, pouring it over the veg, then letting the brine do it's magic in the fridge, we can safely produce pucker-worthy pickles.

See Cook's Notes on using different combinations of vegetables and vinegars.

Ingredients

brine

4½ cups white wine vinegar
2 cups water
5 tablespoons kosher salt
5 tablespoons sugar

veg and seasonings

romanesco or cauliflower

3 small dried red chiles, such as chiles de arbol
1 teaspoon green cardamom pods
1 teaspoon cumin seeds
half a head Romanesco or cauliflower (about 12 ounces)

carrots

1 tablespoon coriander seeds
1 teaspoon black peppercorns
8 ounces slender spring carrots, about 6 inches long, trimmed and peeled
3 large sprigs fresh tarragon

radishes

1/2 teaspoon yellow mustard seeds
1/2 teaspoon fennel seeds
1 bay leaf
1 bunch small radishes (about 8 ounces)
3 large sprigs fresh dill

special equipment

Two (1 quart) jars with lids, 6½- to 7-inches tall; one pint jar with lid

Directions

for the brine

Pour the vinegar, water, salt and sugar into a medium saucepan and bring to a rolling boil over high heat, stirring until the sugar dissolves.

for the romanesco or cauliflower

In a 1-quart jar, put the chiles, cardamom pods and cumin seeds. Add the Romanesco, or cauliflower, florets.

for the carrots

In another quart jar, put the coriander and peppercorns. Add the peeled carrots and tarragon sprigs.

for the radishes

In a pint jar, put the mustard seeds, fennel seeds and bay leaf. Add the trimmed radishes and dill sprigs.

Carefully ladle the hot brine into the jars. Let cool to room temperature, then refrigerate at least overnight. The pickles will keep for a few weeks in the refrigerator.

Cook's Notes

You can prepare pickles with different flavored vinegars. Here are some vegetable-vinegar pairings we love. Use these uniquely balanced brines with the herb-spice pairings and directions above.

Romanesco & White Wine Vinegar: Bring 1¾ cups white wine vinegar, ¾ cup water, 2 tablespoons kosher salt and 2 tablespoons sugar to a boil. Remove from heat. Prepare pickles as described above.

Carrots & Distilled White Vinegar: Bring 1¾ cups distilled wine vinegar, ¾ cup water, 2 tablespoons kosher salt and 2 tablespoons sugar to a boil. Remove from heat. Prepare pickles as described above.

Radishes & Rice Vinegar: Bring 1 cup rice vinegar, ½ cup water, 1 tablespoon kosher salt and 1 tablespoon sugar to a boil. Remove from heat. Prepare pickles as described above.

total time: 30 minutes plus overnight pickling time

active time: 30 minutes

serves: 8 as part of a charcuterie platter

difficulty: easy