Schug (Zhug, Skhug, S'hug, Sahug)

By Christa Sinadinos

The following recipe can be quartered or halved if you prefer to make a smaller batch. I prepare a large batch, pour into 4-ounce mason jars, and freeze all but one jar that I store in the refrigerator. In order to prevent oxidation and discoloration, top it off with a small quantity of olive oil after each use.

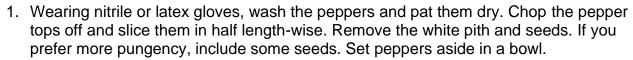


Schug Ingredients:

20 Jalapeño peppers (or spicey red peppers)

- 3 cups Italian parsley (flat leaf parsley, loosely packed) approximately 2 bunches 2.5 cups Cilantro (loosely packed); 2-3 bunches cilantro (2 large bunches or 3 small
- bunches)
 1 head of Garlic (12-16 cloves)
- 3 Tbs. Cumin seed
- 3 Tbs. Coriander seed
- 2 Tbs. Cardamom seed
- 2 Tsp. Sea salt or Kosher salt
- 3-4 Tbs. (1/4 cup) Meyer lemon juice or 3 tbs lemon juice
- 1 Tbs. Lemon zest
- 1 1/4 cup Extra virgin olive oil

Schug Recipe Directions:



Warning: Wear gloves when handling peppers and take care not to touch your eyes. If delicate membranes or the skin are exposed and irritated by hot peppers, apply a fatty-based milk product such as yogurt, cream, or whole milk or coconut or olive oil to quell the burning sensation. Rinsing with water does not work well.

- 2. Peel the papery skin off garlic cloves and remove the rough top. Set them aside in a bowl.
- 3. Destem the parsley, then the cilantro and keep them separated. Briefly soak and strain the leaves or rinse with water to remove dirt, then spin in a lettuce spinner. Gently pat the leaves dry to remove all excess moisture, taking care not to bruise the leaves.



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4. Dry roast the whole seeds (cumin, coriander, and decorticated cardamom seeds) in a skillet on medium-low for a few minutes, stirring frequently so they don't burn. Dry roasting the spices brings out the aromatics, enhancing their flavor.

Then, place seeds in a spice (coffee) grinder or blender; pulse until they are finely powdered. If larger particles remain, filter them through a fine-mesh strainer and continue pulsing until they are powdered.

In order to hasten the process, use powdered spices and skip dry roasting. *Note:* Do not toast powdered spices; they will burn and aromatics will be lost.

- 5. Zest two lemons (using only the yellow, outer portion of the rind). Halve the lemons and squeeze the juice. Filter the seeds and pulp. Measure and set aside.
- 6. *Note:* Lemon juice and zest are not common ingredient in schug, but they preserve the green color by preventing oxidation and they add a subtle tartness that is delicious with the spices.
- 7. Place the jalapeños (or other hot peppers) and garlic in a food processer and pulse until they are coarsely chopped.
- 8. Next, place the parsley in a food processer and pulse until the leaves are very coarsely chopped; then, add the cilantro leaves and pulse until coarsely chopped. *Note:* Do not to blend them too much! The mixture should have a pesto-like consistency; it's not a puree.

How to Incorporate Schug:

- Add one teaspoon to two tablespoons to a vinaigrette, soup, or sauce
- Mix with olive oil and fresh squeezed lemon juice; toss with steamed or sauteed vegetables
- Place a dab on omelets or scrambles
- Mix with freshly squeezed lemon juice and drizzle on beef, lamb, chicken, or fish
- Mix with mayonnaise and spread on beef, elk, turkey, or vegetable burgers

Note: A little bit goes a long way, especially if it contains highly pungent peppers.