

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 ¼ cup Extra virgin olive oil



Schug Recipe Directions:

1. Wearing nitrile or latex gloves, wash the peppers and pat them dry. Chop the pepper tops off and slice them in half length-wise. Remove the white pith and seeds. If you prefer more pungency, include some seeds. Set peppers aside in a bowl.

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.

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

By Christa Sinadinos

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 processor and pulse until they are coarsely chopped.
8. Next, place the parsley in a food processor 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.