

Hungarian *csalamádé* (sweet and sour pickle of grated summer vegetables) recipe

INGREDIENTS:

For about 3 cups

- 1 head summer white cabbage (~ 2 lb/500 gr.)
- 4 peppers, hot or sweet (Hungarian white, banana, purple varieties preferred)
- 4 onions or spring shallots
- 3 small carrots
- 1 tbsp sea salt
- 90 gr. light brown cane sugar (~ 1/4 cup)
- 100 ml white pickling vinegar (a bit more than 3/4 cup)

Seasonings:

- 1 tsp dried dill
- ¾ tsp mustard grains
- ½ tsp coriander grains
- ¼ tsp peppercorns
- 2 cloves
- 1 pinch of ground bay leaf
- 1 pinch of allspice powder
- 1 pinch of ground juniper berries
- 1 pinch of chili flakes
- 1 pinch of ginger powder

METHOD:

Remove the outer wilted leaves of the cabbage, if any, and rinse it thoroughly under running water. Quarter and slice each quarter thinly lengthwise, either with a sharp knife or a mandolin. Rinse the peppers, remove the stem, seeds and inner membranes, then slice them thinly too. Peel the onions/shallots as needed, halve them and cut them either lengthwise or crosswise into slices, making sure they separate well. Skin and grate the carrots using the larger grating size. They can also be hand-cut into a thin julienne.

Place the shredded veggies into a large mixing bowl, pot or jar. Combine them quickly while sprinkling eventually the salt over them. Rest the mix a couple of hours, tossing from time to time. The veggies will start softening. Meanwhile, add the sugar to the vinegar and stir it until the sugar gets dissolved and the vinegar somewhat syrupy. Stir in finally the seasonings and pour it over the veggies. Combine everything thoroughly, by hand and so as to make sure the seasoned vinegar coats well the whole vegetable mix (kitchen gloves can be worn if you fear it might not be good for your skin).

Cover loosely the container - with the lid of the pot, a towel, a cling wrap or a cheesecloth. Set it aside at room temperature for no less than 24 hours to ferment. Once the veggies look completely shrivelled up in a pleasantly sour smelling bath, it's ok. Sterilize the jars as you like to do (e.g. steam them along with their lids for 20 mns) and let them dry on a clean kitchen towel. Wash your hands well. Working with a handful at a time, squeeze all juice out of the vegetable mix and pack it into the jars. Then, pour just enough juice into each jar to cover up the veggies before putting the lids on. If you'd like to keep them for 1 year or so, sterilise the jars in boiling water, then keep them in a cool place. Or, keep them simply as they are in a cool place for 3 months or so.

To serve, use a clean fork or tongs. Keep refrigerated any opened pot and consume the content quickly. Therefore I recommend not using too large jars. Serve as an appetizer, a starter with some bread, or a side, e.g. for grilled meat or veggie burgers.