



Spicy Sichuan Peppercorn-Marinated Cucumbers

Featured on June 30th, 2017, for the program “The Chinese Kitchen Garden”

Recipe courtesy of program guest Wendy Kiang-Spray

*How do three generations of a family’s Chinese gardening traditions take root in America? We welcomed guest Wendy Kiang-Spray, author of *The Chinese Kitchen Garden*, whose parents and grandparents grew food in their own traditional Chinese kitchen gardens in Shandong and Hong Kong, using techniques that Wendy incorporated into her own Maryland garden. As we prepared dishes from Wendy’s book, we explored the many ways Chinese vegetables, herbs, and spices have held significance and symbolic meaning, and how the process of planting food for one’s family is key to preserving a sense of home and tradition wherever you live.*

From Wendy: *Sichuan peppercorns (huā jiāo) have a complex flavor and create a numbing sensation in the mouth. In this and other pickle recipes, I prefer Chinese cucumbers to their Western counterparts because they are crisper and contain fewer seeds. When making this dish, or any other pickle, I recommend sweating the cucumbers first to draw out excess moisture, ensuring that a watery cucumber does not dilute the marinade or pickling liquid.*

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Makes about a quart of pickles

Recipe and headnote from *The Chinese Kitchen Garden: Growing techniques and family recipes from a classic cuisine* by Wendy Kiang-Spray. Copyright © 2017 by Wendy Kiang-Spray. Reprinted with permission from Timber Press. Page 91

Ingredients

- 2-3 long Chinese cucumbers
- 1 tablespoon salt
- ½ teaspoon Sichuan peppercorns
- 1 teaspoon hot chile paste
- 2 teaspoons dark (toasted) sesame oil
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 1 teaspoon Chinkiang or another black vinegar like balsamic
- 1 large clove garlic, very thinly slice

Directions

1. Prepare the cucumbers by cutting each into 4-inch sections. Cut each section into six spears. Place the cucumbers in a colander in the sink and sprinkle with salt. Mix and allow to sit for an hour. Pat dry with a kitchen towel or paper towel and then pack loosely in a glass jar.
2. Combine the peppercorns, chile paste, sesame oil, sugar, vinegar, and garlic in a small bowl and then pour the mixture over the cucumber spears. Refrigerate for at least 2 hours

