

# ESCABECHE (TAQUERIA PICKLES)

YIELD: MAKES ABOUT 2 QUARTS

**Prep time: 30 minutes • Fermentation period: 5 to 7 days • Storage: Refrigerate for up to 1 year**

Escabeche is that deliciously spicy mix of pickled vegetables frequently found on the salsa bar at taquerias. I've lived in California for 17 years, so I was pleasantly surprised to discover the best escabeche of my life on a trip home to my birthplace of Dodge City, Kansas—Tacos Jalisco on Wyatt Earp Boulevard, I salute you! This is my attempt to re-create their escabeche, only fermented instead of vinegar-brined.

## FERMENTATION VESSEL

2 quart jars or 1 half-gallon jar

## INGREDIENTS

2 pounds carrots, peeled and cut diagonally into ½-inch slices

8 garlic cloves, thinly sliced

4 jalapeño or serrano chiles, cut into ½-inch rings (seed for less heat)

1 medium white onion, cut into ½-inch slices

½ head cauliflower, cored and cut into bite-size florets

Juice and grated zest of 2 limes

4 bay leaves

2 teaspoons dried Mexican or regular oregano

2 teaspoons cumin seed

2 teaspoons black peppercorns, lightly crushed

6 cups unchlorinated water

2½ tablespoons pickling or sea salt

1. In a large bowl, combine the carrots, garlic, jalapeños, onion, cauliflower, lime juice and zest, bay leaves, oregano, cumin, and peppercorns, mixing and tossing to distribute the spices evenly.
2. Pack the veggies firmly into two quart jars or a half-gallon jar. If any spices remain in the bowl, scoop them out and add to the jars.
3. In a clean jar, combine the water and salt. Cap and shake the brine to dissolve the salt completely. Make sure none of the salt remains at the bottom and no salt particles are visible in the water.
4. Pour the brine over the veggies, leaving at least 1 inch of headspace. Use a wedge of onion (or fermentation weight of your choice) to keep everything under the brine.
5. Loosely place the lids on the jars or cover them with a clean towel. Place the jars on a plate out of direct sunlight and away from drafts to ferment for 5 to 7 days, tasting on day 5 to see how the flavor is developing.
6. Once it's sour enough to suit you, tightly cap the jars, transfer them to the refrigerator, and store for up to 1 year.

**Get Funky:** Add a drizzle of extra-virgin olive oil on top before serving these to get it a little closer to the real thing.