



Some Like It Hot

Spice up your summer with homemade hot sauce

SOUTHERNERS KNOW HEAT, especially in the dead of August. Some wisdom suggests fighting the fiery season with equally fiery foods, since they can make you sweat and thus cool you down faster. Test that theory with our easy homemade hot sauce. Start by choosing your peppers wisely—

feel free to mix varieties, but stick with the same color for a vibrant end product. Poblanos and jalapeños are milder options, followed by serranos and the venerable habanero, which can be more than one hundred times hotter than a jalapeño. (Keep in mind that smaller peppers tend to be hotter than the larger ones.) Capsaicin, the compound we register as spiciness, is most concentrated in the membrane surrounding the seeds, so removing it will help tone down the heat: the serrated edges of a grapefruit spoon tackle the job more efficiently than a knife. No matter which pepper you use, always wear gloves and switch on your kitchen fan when cooking to avoid capsaicin fumes. We make an herb vinegar to add depth, but you can skip that step in favor of plain apple cider vinegar to let the peppers shine. If the sauce is too spicy, balance the heat by adding more vinegar, sugar, or a splash of water. Similarly, if it's too thick, add another splash of vinegar until you reach the desired consistency. There's a lot of room for variation in this recipe: Swap out other fresh herbs and peppers, and adjust the amount of garlic and sugar to find your favorite combination. Likewise, the possibilities for using the finished product are endless—we recommend a dash to spice up your favorite bloody mary.—*Lia Grabowski*

PHOTOS BY JONATHAN BONCEK

TLP's Hot Sauce

3 cloves garlic, peeled, divided
2 cups apple cider vinegar
1 small onion, peeled and quartered
1 cup oregano, basil, and tarragon
(or other fresh herbs), roughly chopped

12 hot peppers
½ teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon sugar

Makes about 1 cup

1



MAKE HERB VINEGAR

Halve 2 garlic cloves. In a saucepan over medium-high heat, combine vinegar, halved garlic, onion, and herbs. Bring to a boil and cook 5 minutes. Cool, then strain and discard solids. Set aside ¼ cup and reserve remainder for another use.

2



PREP THE PEPPERS

While wearing gloves, cut stems from peppers and discard. Cut peppers in half and use a knife or grapefruit spoon to scrape out core and seeds.

3



COMBINE AND COOK

Smash remaining garlic clove. In a saucepan over high heat, combine 1 cup herb vinegar, peppers, and garlic. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium and cook until peppers are soft, about 20 minutes. Cool for 5 minutes.

4



BLEND IT UP

Place pepper mixture in a food processor and add remaining ¼ cup herb vinegar, salt, and sugar. Process until smooth.

5



SMOOTH IT OUT

Transfer mixture to a fine mesh strainer over a small bowl and press into the strainer with a spatula. Discard any solids.

6



JAR AND STORE

Using a funnel, transfer hot sauce into glass bottles (alternately, pour into a Mason jar). Store in refrigerator for up to a year.