

Lao Hot Sauce with Tomatillos

3 tomatillos (roughly the size of a golf ball)

1 small jalapeño

2 Thai chili peppers (red and/or green)

1 small lime

3 garlic cloves

1/2 T fresh ginger root

1/4 cup cilantro

1.5 T fish sauce

Salt

Water

There are two ways to make this. The first way is to boil the ingredients: If the tomatillos have husks on, take them off and wash the tomatillos. Place the jalapeño and tomatillos in boiling water and boil until jalapeño is soft and tomatillos are soft and turn a pale yellow color. Drain water and allow to cool for a minute while prepping other ingredients. De-stem the Thai chili peppers. Shave skin off of the ginger and cut into 1/2 tablespoon chunks. Peel paper off of garlic and leave whole. De-stem the jalapeño. If you want it extra spicy, keep the seeds in, otherwise spoon the seeds out. In a food processor, add all ingredients and blend until there are no large chunks. Add small amounts of water gradually to loosen the sauce up, adding no more than 1/4 cup water total. Add salt to taste.

The second way to cook this is to roast in the oven, in a sauce pan, or grill tomatillos, garlic and jalapeño until soft and blistered. Proceed to follow the same steps as above.

Chef's note: I find a lot of commonalities between Mexican and Lao food. Salsa verde is a Mexican hot sauce which is made with tomatillos and has a lot of similar ingredients to a tangy Lao hot sauce called Jeow Som.

Recipe by Garden Chef Ilene Rouamvongsor



ATLANTA BOTANICAL GARDEN