

Savory Summer Cucumber Bites

For the Pesto:

- 1 cup chopped chives
- 1/4 cup fresh oregano leaves
- 1 cup chopped green onions
- 1 cup fresh basil leaves
- 1 cup sweet potato leaves (or spinach if sweet potato leaves are unavailable)
- 1 cup chopped leeks
- 4 cloves garlic
- 1 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 1/2 cup nutrition yeast (or grated parmesan cheese for a non-vegan option)
- Salt, to taste

For the Quick Pickled Peppers:

- 10 medium-sized sweet peppers (choose your preferred color)
- 1 cup apple cider vinegar
- 1 T coriander seeds
- 1 T salt
- 2 T honey
- 1 tsp black pepper
- 2-3 fresh sage leaves
- 1 Thai chile pepper

For the Cucumber Bites:

- 2 large English cucumbers, cut into 1/2-inch thick slices
- 200g fresh mozzarella, cut into small slices or cubes
- 2 large tomatoes, sliced into rounds
- 10 fresh basil leaves for garnish



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In a food processor, combine the chives, oregano, green onions, basil, sweet potato leaves (or spinach), leeks, garlic and nutritional yeast. Pulse the ingredients while gradually drizzling the olive oil until you achieve a smooth, pesto-like consistency. Season with salt to taste and blend again to incorporate the salt evenly. Adjust seasoning if necessary. Set the pesto aside.

Slice the sweet peppers into thin rings, removing the seeds and membranes. In a small saucepan, combine the apple cider vinegar, coriander seeds, salt, honey, black pepper and sage leaves. Bring the mixture to a gentle boil over medium heat, stirring until the salt and honey dissolve. Add the sliced peppers to the saucepan and let them simmer for 1-2 minutes. Remove the saucepan from the heat and let the peppers cool down in the pickling liquid. Once cooled, remove the sage leaves. The peppers can be used immediately or refrigerated for later use.

Lay out the cucumber slices on a serving platter. Place a slice or cube of fresh mozzarella on each cucumber slice. Top the mozzarella with a slice of tomato. Spoon a dollop of the prepared pesto on top of each tomato slice. Add a pickled pepper ring on top of the pesto. Garnish each bite with a fresh basil leaf. Serve the cucumber bites immediately as a refreshing and flavorful appetizer.

Recipe by Garden Chef Natalie Fisher-Chavez



ATLANTA BOTANICAL GARDEN