

Zhug with Preserved Lemon

Makes about 1 pint | 15 minutes

The wide world of herby green sauces includes Italian pesto, Argentinian chimichurri, Moroccan chermoula, chile verde from Mexico, and the chile-herb sauces of Thailand. They all share a base of the locally grown fresh herb, a hit of something acidic to brighten the flavor, usually some oil, and most include the spicy bite of chile. If you've got herbs in your garden, what our friend Katherine Deumling of Cook With What You Have calls her geen pantry, you can make your own, mixing whatever looks good at the moment.

But the one green sauce we usually have on hand only needs a few fresh items and a couple of things from the pantry. Originally from Yemen but found across the Levant, zhug combines cilantro (and sometimes a little parsley) with jalapeño, garlic, and spices. The most traditional version, called sahwaiq in Yemeni Arabic, leaves out the acidic element. But we're following the lead of our friends at NY Shuk and adding a little of their preserved lemon paste.

**1 large bunch cilantro
(or 2 smaller bunches)**

1-2 jalapeño chiles*

3-5 garlic cloves

**2 tablespoons NY Shuk
preserved lemon paste***

¼ cup extra virgin olive oil

**¼ teaspoon NY Shuk Hawaii*
spice mix**

**¼ teaspoon RGF kosher or fine
sea salt**

While you can chop everything by hand or use a mortar and pestle for smaller batches, a food processor makes this much easier.

Step 1 Cut the cilantro, stems and all, into roughly 3 inch pieces (leaving the stems long makes it harder to process). Slice the jalapeños into a few pieces, and peel the garlic cloves but leave them whole.

Step 2 Combine everything in the food processor and blitz into a smooth paste that resembles pesto. The zhug keeps in the refrigerator for about a week, but it rarely lasts that long.

*Adjust the chile content for your own heat tolerance, substitute lemon juice for the preserved lemon paste, and ground cardamom for the hawaii