

SALSA : CEBOLLAS ENCURTIDAS

RED ONIONS PICKLED IN SOUR ORANGE JUICE

Encurtir in Spanish means “to pickle.” These pickled onions are delicious enough to eat with a fork! Along with *Chile tamulado*, cebollas encurtidas are part of the indispensable pair of condiments used on virtually all foods in

Yucatán – like salt and pepper are to us. Purists prefer sour orange juice to do the pickling, but expense and the possibility of spoilage mean that most restaurants and take-out stalls use vinegar.

Cooks keep big glass jars full of the onions, and replenish ingredients as needed.

The garlic and chile may stay in the wonderfully fermenting stew for months.

10 SERVINGS

☞ PREPARE THE SALSA ☞

• **2 pounds (1 kilo) medium red onions**,
thinly sliced and separated into rings

• **2 cups (500ml) juice of *naranja agria***
(Also known as sour orange or Seville orange. Substitute: 2 parts fresh lime juice, 1 part each fresh orange juice and grapefruit juice)

• **1 Tbs. (20g) coarse salt** *(sea salt or Kosher)*

• **5 whole cloves**

• **5 whole *pimienta gorda de Tabasco***
(English: allspice)

• **1 tsp. (4g) peppercorns**, *coarsely crushed*

• **1 Tbs. (15ml) dried *orégano Yucateco***
(Substitute: Mexican oregano) lightly toasted in a comal or heavy skillet and ground

• **1 large *chile x'catik*** *(Spanish: güero. Substitute: any “blond” chile such as yellow Italian or banana pepper), charred*

• **1 large head garlic**, *charred*

STEP 1 PLACE ALL INGREDIENTS in a large non-reactive bowl. Allow to macerate at room temperature for 1 hour.

STEP 2 REFRIGERATE. *Cebollas encurtidas* are best when prepared 2-3 days in advance. Before serving, allow to return to room temperature. NOTE: *Cebollas encurtidas* will keep well under refrigeration for 1-2 weeks.