Sides / El Salvador

Curtido

El Salvador's answer to sauerkraut — lightly fermented green cabbage with carrot and oregano, bright with vinegar, with just enough tang and crunch to cut through a pupusa's richness and make every bite taste fresher than the last.

Time 1440 min **Servings** 4

What you'll need.

- ☐ 4 cups (packed) Green cabbage, cored and finely shredded
- ☐ 1 large Carrot, peeled and julienned or grated
- ☐ 0.5 medium onion White onion, thinly sliced into half-moons
- ☐ 0.5 cup White vinegar (or apple cider vinegar)
- ☐ 0.5 cup Boiling water
- ☐ 1.5 tsp Fine sea salt
- ☐ 1 tsp Dried Mexican oregano
- ☐ 0.5 tsp Red pepper flakes or dried chile de árbol, crumbled

Let's make it.

01 Place shredded cabbage in a large bowl. Pour the boiling water over the cabbage, toss to coat, and let it sit for 3 minutes. Drain immediately and rinse under cold water to stop any cooking. The goal is just-wilted cabbage — still crunchy but pliable, with the raw-vegetal harshness softened.

02 In a large bowl, combine the wilted cabbage, julienned carrot, and sliced onion. Pour over the vinegar and sprinkle on the salt, dried oregano, and pepper flakes. Toss thoroughly with clean hands or tongs until everything is evenly combined and the vegetables are coated. Taste and adjust: it should be clearly tart, lightly salty, and have a herbal oregano warmth.

03 Pack the curtido tightly into a clean jar, pressing down so the vegetables are submerged in their own released liquid (or under the vinegar brine). Cover loosely — not airtight — and leave at room temperature for 12-24 hours. This brief room-temperature rest jumpstarts a very light lacto-fermentation that adds just a touch of natural tang beyond the vinegar. Then refrigerate. It is ready to eat right away but improves dramatically overnight. Keeps for 2 weeks refrigerated.

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Servings are an estimate; check quantities in the source recipe.
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