

Olive You



Taking salsa to the olive grove

As a third generation South California native, Matt Gandin grew up with Mexican cuisine. He lived and traveled throughout Mexico while working toward a PhD in Latin American history, exploring the cuisine far beyond the reaches of the ubiquitous taco. At the almost-open [Comal](#) in Berkeley, California, Gandin creates dishes that are deeply rooted in Mexico while being sourced from California ingredients. This philosophy is exemplified in his recipe for olive salsa. The ingredients are untraditional, but the flavor nonetheless evokes the essence of Mexican cuisine. Gandin serves the pungent, black-olive salsa with grilled fish, though we're just as keen on scooping it on tortilla chips for a flavor-packed appetizer.

Black-Olive Salsa

Recipe adapted from Matt Gandin, Comal, Berkeley, CA

Yield: 4 servings

INGREDIENTS

1 small shallot, finely chopped
2 tablespoons Champagne vinegar
2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
1½ tablespoons finely chopped olive oil-packed anchovies
2 cups pitted and coarsely chopped black olives
¼ cup salt-packed capers, rinsed and coarsely chopped
2 Serrano chiles--halved, seeded and finely chopped
1 medium lemon, finely zested and juiced
1 cup extra-virgin olive oil
½ bunch cilantro, stems removed and leaves finely chopped
2 teaspoons kosher salt

DIRECTIONS

1. In a small bowl, combine the shallot and Champagne vinegar and set aside for 10 minutes.
2. Using a mortar and pestle or in a small bowl and using a fork, mash the garlic and anchovies together until they form a paste.
3. Strain the shallot, reserving the vinegar. In a medium bowl, combine the shallot, anchovy-garlic paste, olives, capers, chiles, lemon zest and juice, olive oil and cilantro. Add the salt and season to taste with the reserved vinegar. Serve immediately or refrigerate in an airtight container for up to one week.