



ANSON MILLS

Cornmeal-Crusted Pickle Chips

Yield

About 50 slices of fried pickles (but about 1 quart of pickle slices)

Time

About 30 minutes active time to make the pickles, plus at least 8 hours for them to refrigerate; about 45 minutes to make the sauce and fry the pickle chips

Cooking Remarks

To make our homemade pickle slices, we use pickling cucumbers because they retain their substance and crunch. But choose your cukes carefully. Pickling cucumbers are not waxed and, as a result, are quicker to spoil. Before purchasing, inspect them for bruises and soft spots and make sure they have not started to shrivel.

Before dropping them into hot oil, we dress our pickle slices in Antebellum fine yellow cornmeal instead of a drippy batter coating. The coating, packed onto the slices, adds a complex, toasted corn flavor to the final fry and forms a fantastically crisp shell. Fry in batches and consume immediately.

Instead of or in addition to ranch dip, serve your fried pickles with honey mustard. In a small bowl, stir together 3 tablespoons Dijon mustard and 1 tablespoon honey. That's it!

Equipment Mise en Place

For the pickle slices, you will need a small nonreactive saucepan, a mandoline for slicing the cucumbers (or a sharp chef's knife), a colander, a large bowl, and a clean 1-quart jar.

For the ranch dip, you will need a rasp-style grater, a small skillet, and a small bowl.

For the fried pickles, you will need paper towels; a whisk; a wide, shallow vessel (such as a small baking dish); a small bowl; a baking sheet; a pair of tongs; a heavy-bottomed 10-inch skillet; an instant-read thermometer; and a wire rack.

Ingredients

for the dill pickle slices

- 1 cup distilled white vinegar
- 1 cup spring or filtered water
- 2 teaspoons yellow mustard seeds
- 1 teaspoon dill seeds
- 1/2 teaspoon black peppercorns
- 1/2 teaspoon red pepper flakes
- 2 medium Turkish bay leaves, broken in half
- 2 teaspoons sugar

1/2 teaspoon fine sea salt
1 pound pickling cucumbers, scrubbed well
4 teaspoons kosher salt
2 medium garlic cloves, thinly sliced
1/2 cup fresh dill leaves, roughly torn

for the ranch dip

1/2 tablespoons spring or filtered water
1/2 tablespoons finely grated shallot
1 teaspoon finely grated garlic (germ removed, if present)
1/2 cup sour cream
Fine sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
1/2 tablespoons minced fresh flat-leaf parsley leaves
1/2 tablespoons minced fresh chives

for the fried pickles

About 50 Dill Pickle Slices
1 1/2 cups Anson Mills Fine Yellow Cornmeal
1/2 teaspoon smoked paprika
Fine sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
2 large eggs
1 tablespoon hot sauce
About 2 cups peanut oil

Directions

- 1. Make the pickles:** In a small nonreactive saucepan, combine the vinegar, water, mustard seeds, dill seeds, peppercorns, pepper flakes, bay leaves, sugar, and fine sea salt. Bring to a simmer over medium-high heat, stirring to dissolve the sugar, then remove from the heat. Cover and let cool until ready to use.
- 2. Slice the cucumbers** into 1/2-inch-thick rounds, discarding the ends. (A mandoline is the best tool for the job, but a sharp knife and careful cutting works, too.) Place the slices in a colander set in a large bowl, sprinkle with the kosher salt, and toss well with your hands to make sure the salt is evenly distributed. Let stand at room temperature for about 1 hour, occasionally shaking the colander to encourage the liquid to drain; the cucumbers will soften slightly and give up a few tablespoons of their liquid.
- 3. Rinse the cucumbers** under running cool water while tossing them. Drain well, shaking the colander to remove as much water as possible. Transfer the slices to a clean 1-quart canning jar.
- 4. Stir the garlic and dill** into the vinegar mixture, then ladle it into the jar. Seal the jar well, then shake it. If the cucumbers aren't fully submerged in liquid, open the jar and press them down, then seal again. Refrigerate for at least 8 hours or up to 2 months.

5. *Make the ranch dip:* In a small skillet, stir together the water, shallot, and garlic. Set the pan over medium-low heat and cook, stirring frequently with a small silicone spatula, until the water evaporates, the mixture is pasty and begins to stick to the pan, and the aroma is no longer raw, about 5 minutes. Transfer to a small bowl and let cool to room temperature.

6. Add the sour cream to the shallot-garlic paste, along with ¼ teaspoon salt and ¼ teaspoon pepper. Stir to combine, then stir in the herbs and taste for seasoning. Let stand at room temperature while you prepare the fried pickles or cover and refrigerate for up to 3 days (bring to room temperature before serving).

7. *Make the fried pickles:* Lay the pickle slices in a single layer on paper towels. Pat dry with additional paper towels. Turn the cornmeal into a wide, shallow vessel (such as a small baking dish), then whisk in the smoked paprika, ½ teaspoon salt, and ¼ teaspoon pepper. In a small bowl, whisk the eggs and hot sauce until well combined. Have ready a baking sheet. Drop the pickles a few at a time into the egg mixture, coating both sides. Using tongs, lift out each slice, letting the excess egg drain back into the bowl, then drop the pickle into to the cornmeal. Coat both sides, pressing so that the cornmeal adheres in a thick layer, then set on the baking sheet. Coat the remaining pickles in the egg mixture in the same way, then repeat to bread the rest of the pickle slices.

8. Pour the oil into a heavy-bottomed 10-inch skillet; it should have a depth of about 1½ inch. Set the skillet over medium heat and warm the oil to 375 degrees. Meanwhile, line a wire rack with paper towels and set it near the stove. When the oil has come up to temperature, one at a time, slide in as many pickles as will comfortably fit—do not overfill the pan. Fry the pickles until deep golden brown on both sides, 3 to 4 minutes, flipping the slices once or twice and adjusting the heat as needed to maintain an oil temperature of 350 to 375 degrees. Using tongs, transfer the pickles as they are ready to the prepared rack, then sprinkle with salt. Serve hot with the ranch dip. Meanwhile, fry the remaining pickles in the same way.