KitchenBooQ

Asazuke (Quick Salt Pickles)

Serves: 4 | Cooking Time 30 minutes | Level: Easy



INGREDIENTS

8 oz (225 g) Japanese cucumbers
1 tsp kosher salt
1 piece dried kombu
Optional: 1/2 tsp sugar or 1 tbsp rice vinegar

Notes
Asazuke is meant to be eaten fresh; prolonged storage will turn the vegetables too soft. You can substitute daikon radish, eggplant, or bitter melon using the same salt-rub technique. Always rinse hands after handling kombu to avoid staining. For a vegan version, confirm your kombu is sustainably harvested and free of animal processing aids.

PREPARATION

1. Wash the cucumbers and slice them into thin half-moons, about 1/8-inch thick. Place them in a mixing bowl.

2. Sprinkle the kosher salt evenly over the cucumber slices. Using your hands or tongs, gently massage the salt into the vegetables for about 30 seconds to help draw out moisture.

3. Let the cucumbers rest at room temperature for 10 minutes until they begin to soften and release liquid.

4. If using optional sugar or rice vinegar, add them now along with the kombu. Toss everything together so the kombu absorbs the flavorful brine. Traditional asazuke relies solely on salt and kombu; skip the additions for a purist version.

5. Let sit for another 10 minutes to allow the flavors to meld. The vegetables will be lightly wilted, glossy, and coated in a savory liquid.

6. Serve immediately as a refreshing side dish. Store any leftovers in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 2 days.