

Pickled Collard Stems

Makes 1 1/2 Quarts; easily halves

4 cups diced (1/2-inch) tender collard stems (from 4-5 bunches)
1 cup diced (1/2-inch) Granny Smith apple
2 cups apple cider vinegar
1/4 cup apple juice
1/4 cup thinly sliced garlic (8 to 10 cloves)
1/4 cup light brown sugar
1 tablespoon salt
1 teaspoon ground cayenne pepper
1 tablespoon coriander seeds
6 whole cloves
3 bay leaves
2 teaspoons hot sauce (*I used a smoked onion hot sauce that was custom made for Emily's cousin's Bar Mitzvah—it was good*)

Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil over high heat. While the water is heating, fill a large bowl with cold water and ice cubes. When the water boils, add the collard stems. After 1 minute, transfer the stems to the ice bath. Drain and pat dry. This blanching and shocking step cooks out some of the toughness of the stems and sets the color. Mix the collard stems with the diced apple in a large nonreactive bowl; set aside.

Combine the vinegar, apple juice, garlic, brown sugar, salt, cayenne, coriander seeds, cloves, bay leaves, and hot sauce in a medium saucepan and bring to a boil over high heat. Once the sugar and salt are completely dissolved, remove the pan from the heat and let cool for 5 minutes. Pour the liquid over the stems and apple and stir to combine. Allow the mixture to cool completely, then store in an airtight container in the refrigerator. The pickled stems will keep in the refrigerator for about 2 weeks.