Prep time: 15 minutes
Cook time: 5 minutes
Cooling & Brining time: 24 hours (minimum)
Total time: 24 hours 20 minutes (active time: 20 minutes)
Intensity: Easy (no special equipment; stovetop brine only)

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Ingredients

For the peppers:

- 1 lb (450 g) fresh banana peppers (about 8–10 medium peppers; mild or hot varieties both work)

- 4 cloves garlic, smashed and peeled
- 1 tsp black peppercorns
- 1 tsp yellow mustard seeds
- ½ tsp celery seeds
- ¼ tsp red pepper flakes (optional, for extra heat)
- 2 fresh dill sprigs (optional)

For the brine:

- 1 cup distilled white vinegar (5% acidity)
- 1 cup water
- 2 tbsp granulated sugar
- 1 tbsp fine sea salt (non-iodized)
- 1 bay leaf

Optional add-ins:

- ½ tsp turmeric (adds a lovely golden tint)
- 1 small slice of onion or a few thin carrot coins for color

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Equipment

- 1 clean quart (32 oz / 1 L) glass jar with a tight-fitting lid
- Medium saucepan
- Sharp knife and cutting board
- Canning funnel (helpful but optional)
- Paper towels or clean kitchen towel

Instructions

Step 1 — Sterilize the jar (5 minutes | Intensity: Low)

Wash the jar and lid thoroughly in hot soapy water, then rinse well. Submerge in a pot of boiling water for 5 minutes, or run through a hot dishwasher cycle. Leave the jar warm until ready to fill — a hot brine into a cold jar can cause cracking. Set on a clean towel to dry.

Step 2 — Prepare the peppers (10 minutes | Intensity: Low)

Rinse the banana peppers and pat dry. Slice off the stems, then cut into ¼-inch rings for sandwich-style pickles, or slice lengthwise into spears if you prefer. Discard the stems. For a milder pickle, scrape out the seeds and white membranes; leave them in for more heat. Wear gloves if you're handling a large batch of hot varieties — the oils linger on your hands.

Step 3 — Pack the jar (3 minutes | Intensity: Low)

Drop the garlic cloves, peppercorns, mustard seeds, celery seeds, red pepper flakes, dill sprigs, and bay leaf into the bottom of the warm jar. Pack the pepper rings in tightly, pressing down gently with a spoon — they'll shrink slightly as the brine settles. Leave ½ inch of headspace at the top.

Step 4 — Make the brine (5 minutes | Intensity: Medium)

In the saucepan, combine the vinegar, water, sugar, and salt. Bring to a rolling boil over medium-high heat (about 400°F / 205°C), stirring 1–2 minutes until the sugar and salt dissolve completely. The liquid should be clear, not cloudy. Remove from heat and stir in the turmeric if using.

Step 5 — Pour the hot brine (2 minutes | Intensity: Medium — use caution)

Using a funnel, pour the hot brine over the peppers, filling to ½ inch from the rim and

completely submerging the peppers. Tap the jar gently on the counter to release air bubbles, then top off with more brine if needed. Wipe the rim clean with a damp paper towel.

Step 6 — Seal and cool (1 hour | Intensity: Low)

Screw the lid on firmly. Let the jar cool at room temperature 1 hour, then refrigerate. You'll hear the lid pop as it seals — a good sign, though not required for refrigerator pickles.

Step 7 — Brine and store (24 hours minimum | Intensity: None)

Refrigerate at least 24 hours before eating — 48–72 hours for peak flavor. The peppers will turn from bright green-yellow to a deeper olive tone as they absorb the brine. Store in the refrigerator up to 2 months; flavor improves in the first week and holds steady after.

Chef's Notes & Troubleshooting

- Peppers too soft? Skip the water bath and always refrigerate — these are fridge pickles, not shelf-stable canned goods. For extra crunch, add ¼ tsp calcium chloride (pickle crisp) to the jar.
- Too tangy? Increase sugar by 1 tbsp next batch, or dilute with 2 tbsp water.
- Not enough heat? Leave seeds and membranes in, add more red pepper flakes, or use hot banana peppers.
- Cloudy brine? Normal — it's from the garlic and spices. Discard if you see fuzzy mold or smell off odors.

- Safety note: This is a refrigerator pickle recipe and must be stored cold. For shelf-stable canning, process sealed jars in a boiling water bath for 10 minutes (adjust for altitude) using tested ratios — do not alter the vinegar-to-water ratio.

- Uses: Layer on burgers, subs, and pizza; chop into tuna or potato salad; serve alongside cheese and crackers; muddle into a bloody mary or martini.

Nutrition (per serving — about 2 tbsp peppers with brine)

Nutrient	Amount
Calories	~12 kcal
Protein	0.3 g
Total Fat	0 g
— Saturated Fat	0 g
Carbohydrates	2.5 g
— Fiber	0.5 g
— Sugars	1.5 g
Cholesterol	0 mg
Sodium	~150 mg