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Source of the introductory text

<http://nawalcooking.blogspot.com/2015/05/hummus-kisa-mother-of-all-hummus-oldest.html>

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Hummus

(Recipe by Brigitte Caland)

Ingredients (serving 3–4 guests)

1 cup of chickpeas soaked in two cups of water the night before, add a pinch of baking soda, 2 garlic cloves, 1 coffee spoon salt, the juice of two lemons, ¼ cups of tahineh, salt and pepper

Preparation

1. Cook the chickpeas until soft (an hour or more), remove the skin and keep a few spoons of the cooking liquid. Mash the chickpeas.
2. Puree the garlic with the salt and the lemon juice to which you add the tahineh.
3. Add these combined ingredients to the mashed chickpeas and mix well. If you find the puree too thick then add slowly and very carefully a bit of the cooking liquid (one coffee spoon at a time).

Hummus variation with avocado

(Recipe by Brigitte Caland)

Ingredients (serving 3–4 guests)

1¾ cups cooked chickpeas, ½ big avocado or 1 medium, 2 tablespoons of tahineh, 3 large spoonful of lemon juice, 3 mashed garlic cloves, salt, olive oil to decorate

Preparation

1. Combine the avocado and chickpeas in a mixer and mix until you have a smooth puree.
2. Add the tahineh, garlic, lemon juice and salt.
3. When ready to serve put in a dish and drizzle olive oil on it. Serve with crudités or warm bread.



Hummus variation with beets

(Recipe by Brigitte Caland)

Ingredients (serving 3–4 guests)

½ middle size red beet fully baked in the oven (with aluminum paper around it), 1½ cups of cooked chickpeas, 5–7 tablespoons of the chickpeas cooking liquid, 2 large spoons of tahineh, 3 large spoons of lemon juice, 1½ large spoons of yogurt (optional), 2½ mashed garlic cloves, salt, olive oil with herbs to decorate

For the olive oil with herbs: 1 cup of olive oil, 1 bunch of basil, 1 large spoon of pine nuts all well combined in a mixer.

Preparation

1. Mix chickpeas and beet cut into pieces until smooth.
2. Add the yogurt (optional), the tahineh, the lemon juice and garlic.
3. When ready to serve, put in a dish and drizzle olive oil with herbs on it. Serve with crudités or warm bread.

Hummus Recipes

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Hummus – A Levantine dish travels the world

Chickpeas, *ḥummuṣ* in Arabic, are one of the oldest cultivated legumes with a proven history of at least 7500 years in the Middle East. But what is known as Hummus today actually is a paste made of mashed chickpeas with toasted ground sesame and olive oil served as a cold mezze all over the Levant region. And not only there: Due to the nutritional values of chickpeas, which are very rich in protein, dietary fibre and minerals, Hummus has since long blazed its trail of success. Many different versions of Hummus are prepared today all over the world.

When did the Levantines start to serve chickpeas as a cold appetizer? Some attribute its invention to Saladdin (d. 1193), the famous founder of the Ayyubid dynasty and the first sultan of Syria and Egypt. Did he recognize the nutritional values of Hummus to feed his army or did he rather have it served at his court's banquets? We do not really know, however, the first written proofs of Hummus appear in 13th-century cookbooks in Syria such as

'Winning the Beloved's Heart with Delectable Dishes and Perfumes' by famous historian Ibn al-Adīm of Aleppo (d. 1262). It is fair to assume that Hummus recipes have a much longer history in oral transmission.

Try this delicious recipe of *ḥimmaṣ kassā* as described in the 14th-century cookbook 'Treasure Trove of Benefits and Variety at the Table', to get a taste of the cultural heritage of the Levant! It contains salt preserved lemons and makes use of parsley and peppermint in the paste which gives the Hummus a greenish colour. The dish is garnished with sprinkled olive oil and herbs but pistachio and rose petals are also recommended.

P.S.: Some say Hummus is the way to test the quality of a restaurant in the Levant region: If the Hummus served is excellent the other dishes will be of outstanding quality, too.

Ḥimmaṣ kassā

From the 14th-century anonymous Egyptian cookbook, Kanz al-Fawa'id fī Tanwī' al-Mawa'id (Treasure Trove of Benefits and Variety at the Table), English translation by N. Nasrallah, Brill



Ingredients (serving 3–4 guests)

- 1 cup of boiled chickpeas + 5–7 tablespoons of the chickpeas cooking water
- 1 tablespoon tahineh, stirred with 1½ teaspoons apple vinegar
- ½ cup finely peeled, roasted and ground walnuts, stirred with 3–4 tablespoons lemon juice and ½ teaspoon apple vinegar
- ⅓ cup chopped parsley
- ⅓ cup chopped mint
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- ¼ teaspoon of each (or 2 pinches of each), all crushed: caraway, coriander, ginger and cinnamon
- 1 pinch of freshly ground pepper
- 3 pinches of salt (or more according to taste)
- 1 pinch of black pepper (or more according to taste)
- 2 tablespoons of preserved lemon in salt cut into small pieces
(see detailed instruction in infobox)
- For garnish: olive oil, chopped pistachios, chopped parsley, cinnamon and rose petals (optional)

Preparation

Take already boiled chickpeas, mash them with (the back of) a spoon until not a single chickpea remains whole. However, leave some chickpeas whole and set them aside.

Thoroughly dissolve tahineh in very sour vinegar and add it to the (mashed) chickpeas. Finely grind toasted walnuts, dissolve them in lime juice and a bit of vinegar and add the mix to the chickpeas. Finely pound rue and add it to the chickpeas. Chop Macedonian parsley and mint and add them to the chickpeas, use a lot of these so they give the chickpeas a lovely (green) color.

Add to the chickpeas sweet olive oil, atrāf tib (spice blend), coriander seeds, caraway, cassia, black pepper, and ginger. Mix them very well.

Add a good amount of finely chopped lemon preserved in salt. (In making this dip) Use more lemon than vinegar.

For garnish: Put (the finished) dip in a porcelain bowl and sprinkle the surface with (crushed) pistachios. For those who want to use some of these pistachios in the chickpea mix itself, they can go ahead and do so. Further, put a lot of olive oil on top, and sprinkle chopped Macedonian parsley and rue on it. Decorate it with cassia and (crushed dried) rosebuds.



Salt preserved lemon

Slit each lemon lengthwise. Stuff the slits with salt and pack the lemon in a large, wide earthenware tub. Weigh down the lemons with stones, cover the vessel and set it aside for three days.

Next remove the lemons and put them in a glazed ceramic jar. Collect the juice of the lemons (which came out while they were pressed in the tub) color it

with saffron and strain out the seeds. If this juice is not enough add more lemon juice.

Tightly pack the lemons in jars, (add the lemon juice) and let it submerge the lemons. Seal the surface with sweet olive oil, cover the jar, and stow it (until the lemons mature).

