

Delectable Hummus Appetizer

- 2 1/2 c small dry [chickpeas](#), or 16 oz [can \(BPA free\)](#), well rinsed and drained
- 1/4 cup water, as required to get your preferred consistency (if using canned)
- 3-4 T lemon juice
- 2-3 T [tahini](#)
- 2 cloves garlic, crushed
- 1 t sea salt (or more to taste)
- 1/2 c cucumber, peeled, seeded if necessary and finely chopped
- 1/4 c parsley, finely chopped
- 1/3 c coloured bell pepper, finely chopped
- 2 scallions, finely chopped
- 1 c [Japanese eggplant](#), cut into small bits, brushed with olive oil, dusted with sea salt, then roasted at 400 degrees for 15 minutes
- 1/4 c sun-dried tomato in oil, cut into small pieces
- 1/3 c pine nuts, lightly toasted

If using dry chickpeas, soak overnight in a large bowl of cold water with 1/2 tablespoon of baking soda. Drain, rinse, cook covered, with 1" water above the chickpeas, and 1/4 teaspoon of baking soda, on low heat, for 30 minutes, then allow it to rest covered for an hour, until the chickpeas are soft and evenly yellow when cut through. Finally, uncover and [allow to cool completely before puréeing](#).

The home cooked chickpeas were soft enough to be stirred with a fork, saving time and energy in clean-up. If using canned chickpeas, blend them in a blender or food processor. Add tahini, lemon juice, garlic, salt, and water (if required) until the ingredients form a smooth consistency. Taste to adjust the amount of salt and lemon. Scoop the mixture into a large bowl and add remaining ingredients, excluding small amounts of each to be added on as garnish. Taste, adjust the amount of lemon and salt, then refrigerate. Serve chilled in a shallow casserole surrounded by Spiced Pita Chips.

Spiced Pita Chip

- large [pitas](#), (whole wheat are healthier), split open
- [Spicy Spaghetti Seasoning](#) (Costco Club House brand is good)
- olive oil, for spraying or brushing

It is best to use a spray bottle that you can fill with your own olive oil, (Pampered Chef makes a good one). Spray a thin coating of oil on the halved pitas. Sprinkle on the seasoning. Bake one at a time on two cookie sheets at 350 degrees, keeping an eye out so as not to burn the thin pita. It takes about 12 minutes per pita.

This Spiced Pita Chip recipe is one that my mom has been making for years, with great success. We nibble on these crispy crackers alongside soups, salads and dips. Save the bag that the pita comes in for storing the uneaten baked chips.