

Baba Ghanouj (Smoky Eggplant Dip)

Buy large oval eggplants for this, as they usually have fewer seeds. For a fantastic smoky taste, cook the eggplants over a flame either on a barbecue or over a medium-high flame on a gas stove. Otherwise bake the eggplants in the oven; the spread will still be delicious.

Serve this with matzah at Passover or with grilled pita or challah at other times. (Sephardic Jews use sesame products during Passover, while Ashkenazi Jews do not.

The dip is delicious with or without the tahina.)

2 large eggplants (about 3 lb/1.5 kg total)

TAHINA MAYONNAISE

2 tbsp (25 ml) lemon juice

2 cloves garlic, minced

1 tsp (5 ml) kosher salt

cup (125 mL) mayonnaise

2 tbsp (25 mL) tahina, optional

Dash hot red pepper sauce, optional

2 tbsp (25 ml) chopped fresh cilantro

1. Place eggplants directly on a gas burner or barbecue and turn frequently for 15 to 20 minutes, or until skin is toasted and eggplants are very tender. (Or, place eggplant on a parchment-lined baking sheet and roast in a preheated 400°F/200°C oven for 40 to 50 minutes, or until tender and collapsed.) Cool.
 2. Place eggplants in a large sieve set over a bowl and remove and discard skins. Cut eggplants into chunks and press out excess liquid. (If there are big pockets of seeds you can discard them, but do not try to remove all the seeds.)
 3. Meanwhile, in a large bowl, whisk together lemon juice, garlic, salt and mayonnaise. Add tahina and hot pepper sauce, if using. Taste and adjust seasonings if necessary. (Do not worry if sauce is thick and unmanageable when you first start mixing; it will smooth out when you add all the ingredients.)
 4. Add eggplant and combine well. Sprinkle with cilantro.
- MAKES 3 CUPS (750 ML)