

Fire Roasted RED PEPPER HUMMUS

Freshly made hummus is a staple in my refrigerator. Often, I like to mix it up and try a variety of additions to my favorite traditional Mediterranean lemon-forward hummus dip. Roasted red peppers add sweetness, rich orange color, and slightly grainy texture.

For a smoother, creamier hummus, soak and cook dried chickpeas. If you are short on time, use quality canned chickpeas, preferably from Spain or Portugal, if possible.

If you have time to cook dried chickpeas, it is essential to presoak before cooking. To help remove the chickpea skin and absorb moisture, add baking soda to the water when soaking and cooking chickpeas.

INGREDIENTS

1 -15 oz can/439g chickpeas, drained (reserve a few for garnish)
OR cook 200 g dried chickpeas (instructions below)
2 red bell peppers, or a (4-ounce) jar roasted red bell peppers
2 cloves garlic, smashed or to taste
3 tbsp/45 ml tahini paste
¼ cup/60 ml extra virgin olive oil, plus splash for garnish
2 tbsp/30 ml freshly squeezed lemon juice, or to taste
Salt and pepper, to taste
1 tbsp/15 ml water, or more to reach desired consistency
Fresh parsley leaves, for garnish
Za'atar or smoked paprika, sprinkle as garnish

METHOD

Roast the red bell pepper over open flame or under the broiler. Use tongs to turn peppers to blacken all sides. Pop the roasted peppers into a heavy paper bag to let the peppers steam. When cool rub off all blackened skin with a damp cloth or peel off with a paring knife. Remove stem, slice open and remove the seeds.

Combine the drained canned chickpeas or cooked dried chickpeas, roasted red peppers, garlic, tahini paste, and olive oil in a food processor and puree until smooth. Add the lemon juice and season with salt and pepper to taste. If required, add a splash of water and pulse until desired consistency.

Transfer hummus to a chilled bowl and garnish with a splash of extra virgin olive oil, reserved cooked chickpeas, and parsley leaves. Serve hummus with crostini, crackers, naan bread or crudités. If you don't serve immediately, cover hummus with plastic wrap and gently press to form a seal to prevent skin from forming.

COOK DRIED CHICKPEAS

¾ cup + 1 tbsp /200 g dried chickpeas
1 ½ tsp/7 ml baking soda (1 tsp for soaking and ½ tsp for cooking)
1 tsp/5 ml salt

METHOD

Soak dried chickpeas overnight in a large bowl with enough cold water and 1 tsp/5 ml baking soda to cover by at least 3 inches: drain and rinse-soaked chickpeas. Add to a large pot with water and ½/2 ml tsp baking soda, enough water to cover chickpeas by at least 3 inches.

Bring to a boil, lower the temperature to medium, cover with a lid, and cook for 40 minutes. When chickpeas are soft enough to crush with a fork or two fingers, add the salt and continue to cook for 15 minutes. Drain and cool before using.