

Baba Ganoush

Baba ganoush is Middle Eastern, so think Israel or Lebanon or Turkey for flavor compatibility. At your house, you can add anything that pleases you, but flavors from these areas will keep an authenticity.

Pureeing in a food processor is a common accommodation, but traditionally the eggplant mush would just be stirred with a fork to incorporate the ingredients. There is a difference in texture between the two. I prefer the fork mixing as it is one less thing to clean.

2-3 eggplants-the big purple kind, about 32 ounces

3 large cloves of garlic smashed into a paste or olive oil roasted or tamed

2 tablespoons lemon juice

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup tahini

$\frac{1}{3}$ cup extra-virgin olive oil

EVOO for brushing the eggplant

8 sprigs fresh flat-leaf parsley, chopped

Sea salt and pepper, to taste

Hungarian or smoked paprika

Instructions

1. Heat the oven to 400° Fahrenheit. Place a sheet pan in the oven.
2. Cut the eggplant in half stem to blossom end.
3. Brush the cut surface with some extra virgin olive oil and salt and pepper.
4. Place the cut side down on the hot pan and roast for 30-45 minutes or until the eggplant flesh is very tender.
5. Remove the pan from the oven. Let the eggplant cool in the sheet pan till warm enough to handle.
6. Place a wire mesh strainer over a stainless bowl. Scoop out the flesh into the strainer. Discard the skins and remove any bits of skin from the eggplant in the strainer. Press the eggplant with the back of the spoon to encourage the water to drain out. Allow to drain 10 minutes.
7. Place the drained eggplant into a bowl. Add the garlic and lemon juice to the eggplant and stir rapidly-not too fast, don't splash-with a fork to make a rough puree. Add the tahini and mix. Add the extra virgin olive oil and parsley. Mix to incorporate the olive oil and check for seasoning. It will take a generous amount of salt
8. Innovate with ingredients such as diced roasted red bell peppers, red pepper flakes, ground cumin or sumac or coriander.

9. Place the dip into a serving bowl, drizzle with a bit more EVOO and garnish with good paprika. Pita bread is a popular dipping item, or pita chips or crudeties.