

Baba Ghanouj

By Martha Rose Shulman

Time 1 hour 15 minutes

Rating ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ (941)



Andrew Scrivani for The New York Times

Baba ghanouj is a signature grilled eggplant purée found across the Middle East, enriched with tahini and seasoned with lemon juice and lots of garlic. The dish has a smoky, pungent flavor. Don't forget to pierce the eggplant before you put it on the grill or over a gas flame on the stove. Sesame tahini should be slightly runny — virtually all of the imported brands have this consistency, but domestic supermarket versions can be thick and pasty, and a bit flavorless. As tahini sits, the oil separates, so the mixture should be stirred before it's used.

INGREDIENTS

Yield: About 2 cups

FOR THE BABA GANOUSH

2 pounds eggplant, preferably small eggplants

¼ cup freshly squeezed lemon juice (more to taste)

¼ cup sesame tahini, stirred if oil has separated out

1 to 2 tablespoons plain low-fat yogurt, as needed

2 garlic cloves, cut in half, green shoots removed

Salt to taste

FOR THE GARNISH

Extra-virgin olive oil

Chopped flat-leaf parsley

PREPARATION

FOR THE BABA GANOUSH

Step 1

Prepare a hot gas or charcoal grill. Pierce the eggplants in several places with a fork or the tip of a knife, and place over the hot coals. Grill, turning regularly, until soft and blackened all over. If you don't have a grill but do have a gas stove, preheat the oven to 425 degrees. Cover the top of your stove under the burner grates with foil to facilitate cleaning. Turn on your oven fan (so the smoke alarm won't go off), and roast the eggplants directly over the flame, turning often until charred and softened. Small, thin eggplants will cook through this way, but larger eggplants must be finished in the oven. Wrap in foil, and place in the hot oven for 20 minutes until thoroughly softened. You can also roast the eggplant under a broiler until charred and softened. The flavor of the baba ganoush will not be as smoky.

Step 2

Place the grilled eggplant in a colander in the sink, and allow to cool and drain. Peel and discard the black skins, cut off the stems, and let the eggplants sit in the colander to drain for another 15 to

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Add the lemon juice, yogurt and tahini. In a mortar and pestle, pound the garlic to a paste with a generous pinch of salt. Add to the food processor, and blend with the eggplant. Add salt to taste.

Step 4

Mound the puree in a bowl or on a platter, and drizzle with olive oil. Sprinkle with parsley. Serve with pita bread.

TIP

Advance preparation: This dish can be made several hours ahead. The flavors are best on the day it's made, as the garlic, lemon juice and eggplant become more pungent over time. Martha Rose Shulman can be reached at martha-rose-shulman.com.

Private Notes

2 months ago

Delicious!
