

Fawaffle (Waffled Falafel) and Hummus

IRON: Belgian or standard

TIME: 20 minutes, plus overnight soaking for chickpeas

YIELD: Serves 4

Not only is waffled falafel a healthier alternative to the deep-fried version, it's as delicious as it is fun to say.

NOTE: To time this recipe for simultaneous serving, waffle the falafel while you're finishing up the hummus.

I often have canned chickpeas on hand for making hummus or for tossing in salads, so I would love to use those canned chickpeas to make falafel. But there's a problem: They're too soft and too moist for this recipe. After a long soak, dried chickpeas yield a firmer and meatier ingredient more suited for falafel. When it comes to the hummus, though, softer chickpeas are fine, so it's easier to use canned.

Removing the skins from chickpeas is the key to creating incomparably smooth hummus. Is it tedious? A bit. Is it strictly necessary? Not strictly. It will take about 3 or 4 minutes to get 95 percent of the skins off, and another few minutes to go after the last 5 percent. I usually stop after the first 3 or 4 minutes. Whether skinned or not, the chickpeas must first be processed without any additional ingredients, until they're ground as finely as possible. Only then do you add everything else.

Adding flour to the falafel makes the result a bit lighter and more cakelike, but it's not much flour and you can leave it out if you'd like. The recipe still works beautifully.

INGREDIENTS

1 cup dried chickpeas, picked over and soaked in water overnight in the refrigerator
½ small onion, roughly chopped
3 cloves garlic
¼ cup chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon ground cumin
½ teaspoon ground coriander
¼ teaspoon baking powder
¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper
Nonstick cooking spray
Perfectly Smooth Hummus (recipe follows)
4 pockets pita bread (optional)

NOTE: To time this recipe for simultaneous serving, waffle the falafel while you're finishing up the hummus.

If you're serving this with pita bread, heat that in the waffle iron, too. It will be ready in 15 seconds, and the result will be twice as waffled: warmed and waffled pita bread, filled with waffled falafel, topped with dollops of Perfectly Smooth Hummus, and served with tomatoes, cucumbers, and parsley with a drizzle of olive oil.

- 1 Preheat the waffle iron on medium. Preheat the oven on its lowest setting.
- 2 Drain the soaked chickpeas and place them with the onion and garlic in a food processor. Pulse until blended but not pureed.
- 3 Add the parsley, olive oil, flour, salt, cumin, coriander, baking powder, black pepper, and cayenne pepper, and pulse until mostly smooth.
- 4 Coat both sides of the waffle iron grid with nonstick spray. For each fawaffle, place about ¼ cup of batter in the waffle iron, leaving a bit of space between scoops for each to expand.
- 5 Close the lid of the waffle iron and cook for 5 minutes before checking. Remove the fawaffles when they are cooked through and evenly browned.
- 6 Repeat Steps 4 and 5 with the remaining batter.
- 7 Keep finished fawaffles warm in the oven. Serve them with the hummus and pita bread.

TIPS

- Falafel from a box? There's no shame in that. Prepare the falafel mix according to package directions. Be sure to let the mixture sit for 15 to 30 minutes to allow the dry ingredients to hydrate fully. Waffle as instructed above.
- Leftover falafel mixture can be stored in a covered bowl in the refrigerator for a few days. No need to let it come to room temperature—just add another minute or two to the cook time.

Perfectly Smooth Hummus

TIME: 20 minutes | **YIELD:** About 1½ cups; serves 4

1 Remove the skins from the chickpeas: Fill a large bowl with water, pour the chickpeas into the bowl, and rub them gently to pop off as many skins as you can. The skins float to the top, where they can be skimmed off. It's not necessary to get every last one off, so leave the stubborn ones.

2 In a food processor or with a blender, pulse the chickpeas until just pureed.

3 Add the garlic, ¼ teaspoon salt, olive oil, tahini, and lemon juice, and blend until smooth. Taste and add more salt or lemon juice, if desired. To adjust the consistency, add 1 tablespoon of olive oil or water at a time, pulsing to combine.

4 Serve with the fawaffles. Leftover hummus will keep in a covered container in the refrigerator for up to a week.

INGREDIENTS

1 can (15 ounces) chickpeas, drained and rinsed

1 small clove garlic, minced

Salt

¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil

¼ cup tahini

2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice, or more as needed

NOTE: You can substitute smooth, unsalted peanut butter for the tahini or eliminate it altogether. If you don't want to use tahini or peanut butter, reduce the lemon juice to 1 tablespoon.