

Easy Hummus at Home – Comfort du Jour

If you love hummus, but not the price of a small container, this recipe is for you. With only a few simple ingredients, you can make delicious hummus at home. I'm finding this a great way to use some of the extra garbanzo beans I purchased when the shelter-in-place rules went into effect. The trick to making it nice and smooth is heating the beans in their liquid before processing them, so don't skip that step. This recipe makes about 2 cups of hummus; flavor variations are suggested at the end.

Ingredients:

1 can (15 oz.) garbanzo beans, preferably with minimal additives (ideally, just beans, water and salt)
2 Tbsp. tahini* (see note below)
1 to 2 cloves chopped fresh garlic (should measure about 1 Tbsp.)
2 to 3 Tbsp. extra virgin olive oil (if you have some premium stuff, this is a good recipe to use it!)
Juice of half a lemon
Kosher or sea salt to taste
Food processor or blender

Instructions

1. Warm beans and liquid in small saucepan until simmering and heated through.
2. Drain beans, reserving the liquid in a measuring cup with pour spout.
3. Empty all the beans, tahini, chopped garlic and about 1 Tbsp. bean liquid into the processor bowl, and pulse 5 times for about 3 seconds each time. The mixture will be sticky and clumpy, but that's OK. Add another tablespoon of liquid and pulse 5 times again.
4. Use a rubber spatula to scrape the mixture down into the processor bowl, then replace the cover and turn on the processor to run continuously. With the processor running, slowly drizzle 2 Tbsp. of the olive oil into the mixture (or more if you like a more intense olive oil flavor). Stop and scrape down again, and then process again, slowly streaming more of the warm bean liquid into the garbanzo mixture until you achieve the desired smoothness and consistency. The mixture will firm up a bit when chilled. Squeeze lemon juice into the hummus and pulse to blend.

Hummus is a great healthy snack. Enjoy it as a dip with fresh cut vegetables, crackers or pita bread, and even as a sandwich spread in place of mayo.

*Tahini is essentially a paste made of ground sesame seeds. It has a mild nutty flavor and sticky texture, like a thin peanut butter. In a pinch, if you don't have tahini, you could use a natural, unsweetened peanut butter as a substitute. But if you pick up tahini on your next essentials run, I promise I'll help you use it!

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Flavor Variations

Each recipe begins the same as the simple recipe above. For smooth texture, add mix-ins earlier in the recipe; for chunkier texture, add them later.

Artichoke and garlic: Use 5 to 6 artichoke heart quarters with the base recipe; I usually do a rough chop on them before adding to the garbanzo mixture. If your artichoke hearts are marinated in oil and herbs, use less olive oil in the final recipe.

Roasted red pepper: Use equivalent of one pepper, either roasted at home or purchased. I like to add sweet or hot smoked paprika for a flavor punch.

Sun-dried tomato: Use about 5 to 6 chunks of tomato, rough chopped before adding; plump them first in hot water or in the bean liquid you've drained.

Spinach: Sauté a generous handful of fresh spinach until wilted, or thaw (and squeeze dry) about 1/2 cup frozen spinach; add to bean mixture early for very smooth blend.

Caramelized onion (slightly sweet): Sauté a small onion in olive oil until very soft and golden in color; add to bean mixture at any point of the recipe (I like to add it later to retain some onion shapes).

Roasted beet (slightly sweet): Purchase the roasted beets ready-to-go from the produce section. I don't recommend canned beets because of the water content. About 2 to 3 small beets will be good; rough chop and add them early to the bean mixture. Finished hummus will be a lovely pink color.

White bean hummus: Use cannellini beans instead of garbanzos. Add fresh chopped or dried oregano; use slightly less bean liquid and oil. The creamy cannellini beans have a creamy texture and will make this a very elegant and silky hummus. Sprinkle with pine nuts just before serving.

Black bean hummus: Use black beans instead of garbanzos. I like to throw lots of spice into this one; think chili and cumin spices, maybe even a small can of roasted green chiles. Rather than lemon juice, use red wine vinegar.