



KALILS

IN THE KITCHEN



ESSENTIAL MIDDLE EASTERN MEZE

Enjoy these three Kalil family recipes. We've included Baba Ghannouj, Stephen's Traditional Hummus, and Tabbouleh! These essential meze recipes are simple and delicious—perfect for any gathering.

BABA GHANNOUJ

Baba Ghannouj, or "Baba" for short, is almost identical to hummus in terms of the ingredient list save one critical substitution: that of eggplant for chickpeas, which results in a completely different flavor profile. The best, most delicious Baba is made with charred eggplant—the more charred the better.

INGREDIENTS

- 3 medium eggplants
- ¼ cup tahini
- 3 TBL fresh squeezed lemon juice
- ¼ tsp salt (or add more to taste)
- 1 tsp garlic, minced



DIRECTIONS:

Eggplant Prep: Perforate each eggplant using a knife, then coat the outside in olive oil. Grill for 30 minutes, turning frequently until cooked through.

Transfer grilled eggplants to a bowl and cover with plastic wrap. Set aside for 10 minutes to allow the skin to steam. Once cool enough to handle, pull off skin and discard, saving the soft flesh from the inside of the eggplant. (Should yield approximately 2 cups of smoky flesh.)

Creating the Baba: Combine tahini, lemon juice, salt, and garlic in a food processor and blend. Stop processor and add eggplant flesh. For a chunkier texture, pulse a few times to combine eggplant with the rest of the ingredients. Blend thoroughly if a smoother consistency is preferred, scraping down the sides of the food processor as necessary to incorporate all ingredients.



TABBOULEH

Here's the thing about Tabbouleh: while some think of it as salad and others refer to it as meze, in our hearts (and kitchen) it's nothing short of an art form. As Gail says, "There's an art to Tabbouleh because it's all done according to taste. It's important to taste as you mix so that you can compensate for the flavors of the tomatoes, which are always shifting according to the season, as well as the parsley—each bunch tastes a little different."

Our chief artist in residence at Steve's Backroom was always Therese, who mixed each batch by hand. Whenever we make this dish we think of her standing on her stool in front of a huge bowl of Tabbouleh, the scent of lemon brightening up the kitchen as she sifted the ingredients through her hands until the flavor was just right.

To recreate this masterpiece there are a few things you'll need to remember: Touch your Tabbouleh. Taste your Tabbouleh. And, never, ever let a machine come near your Tabbouleh.

INGREDIENTS

3 cups parsley, finely chopped
1 ½ cups roma tomatoes, diced
(juices drained)
1 cup green onions, chopped
½ cup #1 bulgur wheat
¼ cup fresh squeezed lemon juice
¼ cup + 1 TBL olive oil
1 tsp salt
½ tsp finely ground black pepper

DIRECTIONS:

Place the cracked wheat into a mixing bowl. Add enough warm water to cover 1 inch above the wheat. Set aside to soak for 5 minutes, then drain any excess water.

Combine soaked bulgur with the rest of the ingredients in a large mixing bowl. Gently mix with your hands until all ingredients are well incorporated and evenly distributed. Be sure to taste as you go!

Notes: As you're mixing your Tabbouleh, keep in mind that salt and citrus counterbalance each other—if your mixture tastes too lemony, add more salt (and vice versa). The fineness of your parsley will also affect how much of each ingredient is needed to achieve the right balance.

STEPHEN'S TRADITIONAL HUMMUS

You should know that we have a bit of a hummus skirmish going on in the Kalil family. Stephen continues to prefer a basic recipe that straddles the line between Israeli and Lebanese hummus, while Big Steve's tastes are trending as of late toward a creamier hummus with a bit of tang thanks to the addition of yogurt. Our family's difference of opinion is just a battle in the much greater "Hummus War" between Israeli and Lebanese -style variations, though. One is more Tahini-centric while the other features stronger notes of lemon and garlic, but without a doubt, both are delicious...and the same goes for Stephen and Big Steve's preferred recipes.

DIRECTIONS:

Stir tahini to re-incorporate oils. Add tahini, garlic, and 2 TBL lemon juice to a food processor and blend until smooth. (Note: Mixture will seize up, but will smooth out as processing continues.) Add 2 TBL of the liquid from the chickpeas and blend until smooth. Add chickpeas, remaining 3 TBL of lemon juice, and 2 TBL of chickpea liquid to the processor and blend for 30 seconds to 1 minute until fully incorporated, scraping down the sides as necessary. Add 1 tsp salt (or more to taste) and continue to blend until a rich and creamy texture is achieved. Hummus can't go too long!

INGREDIENTS

- 2 15.5-oz cans chickpeas
(strained, with juices reserved)
- 1/3 cup tahini
- 2 tsp minced garlic
- 5 TBL fresh squeezed lemon juice,
divided
- 1 tsp salt

