

Hummus bi Tahina

Here's my starting position for the classic middle eastern chick pea dip. Such things are always a matter of personal taste so adjust away to your heart's content.

Planning

serves:	4
prep time:	8 hours
cooking time:	2 hours

Ingredients

250g dried chick peas
100g tahina
1 lemon, juice of
2 cloves garlic, peeled
2 tbs olive oil
salt and pepper

Method

Soak the chick peas overnight in cold water. Drain them, add them to a saucepan and cover them well with cold fresh water. Do not add salt - it will toughen the chick peas and they'll never get tender. bring them to the boil, skim any scum that rises to the surface, lower the heat and simmer gently for about about 1 1/2 hours. Test the chick peas to see if they're tender; if not continue simmering until they are. (I find it can often take 2 hours - top up with boiling water to keep the peas covered with water throughout.) Drain the peas in a collander reserving the cooking water. Allow everything to cool.

When everything is cool, put the peas in the bowl of a food processor. Add the tahina, lemon juice, olive oil, garlic, pepper and salt (say, 1 tsp to start with). Blitz everything together adding enough cooking water from the chick peas to achieve a smooth paste of the desired consistency (that is, something that is suitable for dipping pitta bread). Taste and adjust the seasonings (salt, pepper, lemon juice, olive oil, even tahina) to your liking.