

OPTIMAL YOU PRESENTS A HEALTHY HOLIDAY HAPPY HOUR

HUMMUS BAR

Hummus is a versatile Middle Eastern dip or spread bringing benefits from fighting inflammation to supporting gut health. Add your own flavor options.

INGREDIENTS

1 (15-ounce) can chickpeas
(garbanzo beans), drain & rinse
1 garlic clove, minced
1/4 cup lemon juice (1 large lemon)
1/4 cup tahini
2 Tbsp Extra Virgin Olive Oil
Garnish with paprika

FLAVOR OPTIONS (Add to processor last, if desired)

Roasted Pepper: 2 roasted red peppers, 1/2 tsp paprika,
replace lemon with lime juice

Chipotle: 2 -3 TBSP chipotle or hot sauce

Sun Dried Tomato: 1/4 cup sun dried tomatoes,
2-4 Tbsp fresh basil

Jalapeno Cilantro: 1 seeded and chopped jalapeno,
1/2 cup fresh cilantro

Spinach: 2 cups fresh spinach.

Tahini-Free: Substitute 2-3 Tbsp olive oil.

DIRECTIONS

1. In the bowl of a food processor, combine tahini & lemon juice. Process for 1 minute. Scrape sides & bottom of bowl. Process for 30 seconds more.
2. Add olive oil & minced garlic to bowl. Process 30 seconds. Scrape sides & bottom of bowl. Process 30 seconds or to well blended.
3. Drain & rinse chickpeas. Add half of chickpeas to food processor. Process 1 minute then scrape sides & bottom of bowl. Add remaining chickpeas & process until thick and smooth; 1 to 2 minutes.



Serve as a dip with a variety of fresh vegetables, whole grain pita wedges or whole grain crackers. Use as a spread on a whole wheat tortilla or whole grain bread with cucumber, bell peppers, shredded carrots & cabbage.

SUPERSWAP SPINACH DIP

Spinach dip is a popular appetizer often prepared with mayonaise, cream, cheese and sour cream. We use Greek yogurt as a delicious healthy swap instead.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
- 6 cups (6 ounces) baby spinach leaves,
finely chopped
- 1 garlic clove, minced (about 1/2 teaspoon)
- 1/4 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes
- 1/4 teaspoon sea salt
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1 cup plain 2% Greek yogurt
- 1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese

DIRECTIONS

1. In a 10-inch skillet, heat the oil over medium heat.
2. Add the spinach, garlic, crushed red pepper, salt & black pepper. Cook 3 mins.
3. Put yogurt in medium bowl. Stir in spinach mixture & cheese.
4. Chill in the fridge for at least 15 minutes before serving.
5. Store leftovers in airtight container in refrigerator < 3 days.

Serve with sliced french bread, whole grain crackers, sliced bell peppers, or your choice!

TIPS

Add a few chopped canned artichokes or water chestnuts, or both, to the recipe.

Sandwich: This dip also makes a great veggie sandwich spread.

Kale lovers: Swap out the spinach for the same amount of kale.



WINNING CHARCUTERIE BOARD

A Charcuterie is much more than meat & cheese! After choosing one or two options for meat and cheese, add any combination of the following to add flavor (and fiber!) to your board.

Cured Meats: Prosciutto, capicola, etc.

Cheese: Brie, manchego, goat, bleu, aged cheddar, etc.

Fruit: Apple, slices, grapes, pear slices, pomegranate arils

Dried Fruit: Dried apricots, dried figs, golden raisins

Nuts: Walnuts, cashews, almonds, marcona almonds, pistachios (Try spiced options as well as plain)

Honey Whole Grain or Brown Mustard

Whole grain crackers, thinly sliced and toasted whole grain bread, whole grain pita slices



Chutney is a condiment originating in India made from cooked fruit, vegetables, spices & herbs. You can buy it at the store, or easily make it at home.



STONE FRUIT CHUTNEY

1 ½ cup dried apricots, chopped

1 cup dried cherries (unsweetened), chopped

1 cup pomegranate juice (Try the Pom brand in produce dept.)

1 apple, peeled and chopped

2 cup water

2 chai spiced tea bags.

DIRECTIONS

Place all ingredients in a medium sauce pan. Bring to simmer for about 40 minutes, adding more water if needed. Transfer to a bowl and serve warm, room temperature or refrigerate and reheat up to 4 days later. Pairs well with bleu and brie cheese and salty, hard cheeses like parmesan or manchego.

BENEFICIAL BEVERAGES

Warm weather calls for hot beverages to warm your hands and heart. Try these versions with functional benefits that can enhance your health.

GOLDEN MILK

Turmeric is a touted anti-inflammatory spice known to support the immune system and reduce inflammation in the body. It's action is further enhanced by black pepper. Enjoy a smooth and satisfying hot beverage, Golden Milk, aptly named for it's light yellow color.

Pour 3 cups of your favorite plant-based milk or a combination, into a saucepan (such as; unsweetened almond, oat, coconut or soy milk.)

Add 1 ½ tsp ground turmeric, ¼ tsp ground ginger
¼ tsp ground cinnamon, 1 pinch of black pepper.

Heat until almost simmering, then add 1-2TBSP natural sweetener of choice, like honey or agave nectar.

Enjoy immediately or reheat up to three days later.

Just a warning, turmeric stains! If you spill, clean promptly.



HOT CIDER

Heat fresh apple cider on the stovetop and enjoy with a cinnamon stick.

In each cup you'll find a couple grams of fiber, plus potassium and magnesium.

HEALTHIER HOT COCOA

Cocoa powder is known for it's anti-inflammatory properties, which when combined with processing and plenty of added sugar, lose their impact.

That's no reason to skip hot cocoa this season!

Ditch the packets and explore a DIY version:

Add 1ccup unsweetened plant-based milk or low-fat dairy milk. Once warm, but not simmering, add 2 ½ tsp unsweetened cocoa powder, ½ TBSP pure maple syrup or agave nectar, a pinch of sea salt, 1 TBSP chopped dark chocolate or chocolate chips, ¼ tsp vanilla extract.

HOT LEMON MOCKTAIL *(Hold the whisky)*

Hot water with lemon, honey and cinnamon is an easy winter-weather beverage that will warm you. High in Vitamin C, this hot beverage will also support digestion and add anti-oxidants to your day. For even more benefit, steep with a sachet of green tea.

