

ALISON ROMAN'S LENTIL DIP WITH TOASTED GARLIC AND CRISPY HERBS



"This is my best interpretation of 'fava', the classic Greek dip you're able to get at any taverna across the country. Each version I've had, made with yellow lentils (not fava beans), lots of lemon, garlic and olive oil, is wonderful, and I love them all. I suspect they're using a different technique, as the ones I've had in Greece were sublimely smooth, and this version is charmingly lumpy (intentional). The best part about this dip is that you don't need a food processor or blender: The lentils cook in just enough water to fully break them down into mush. Season aggressively, and – if making this ahead – know it'll firm up as it sits. (You can always thin it out with more lemon juice, olive oil, or a touch of water as needed.)"

Serves 4-6 / Makes about 480ml

Ingredients

- 250g yellow lentils kosher salt
- 2 tbsp fresh lemon juice, plus more to taste
- 4 tbsp olive oil
- 4 garlic cloves (2 finely grated, 2 thinly sliced)
- 8-10 sage leaves, or 1 tbsp thyme or oregano leaves
- Freshly ground black pepper or chilli flakes

Do ahead

Lentil dip can be made 5 days ahead, stored wrapped and refrigerated.

Eat with

As a snack, I like this as a dip with any sort of bread and/or with raw or blanched vegetables. I also find it a delightful side, sitting somewhere between a starch and a sauce. It would be perfect with Overnight Lamb and a pile of Vinegar-Braised Greens (also in my book).

Method

1. Bring 650ml water to the boil in a small pot. Add the lentils and season with salt. Reduce the heat to medium-low and simmer until the lentils are completely tender and cooked through and then pass into total mush. As they cook and break down and the water evaporates, stir them constantly to encourage them to further break down into what looks to be a coarse paste (not watery or soupy). This whole process should take 20-25 minutes.
2. Once the lentils are the perfect mush/dip texture, remove them from the heat. Add the lemon juice, 2 tablespoons of the olive oil and the grated garlic. Season with salt, plus more lemon juice if you want. Let cool while you make the topping.
3. Heat the remaining 2 tablespoons of olive oil in a small skillet or pot over a medium-high heat. Add the sliced garlic and herbs. Cook, swirling occasionally, until the garlic has toasted, crisped and browned, and the herbs are crispy, 2-3 minutes. Remove from the heat and season with salt and the pepper of your choosing.
4. To serve, transfer the dip to a bowl, spooning the toasted garlic-herb mixture over.