RECIPE

Baked chickpea patties in a whole-wheat pita with tahini-yogurt sauce

A lunch of falafel made from dry soaked chickpeas, parsley and mint, baked on a hot oiled pan and tucked into a whole-wheat pita with tomato, cucumber and a measured tahini-yogurt sauce.

MAKES

4 servings US Metric

TOTAL

50 min

Ingredients

- [ ] 1 ½ cups dry chickpeas, soaked, drained and patted dry
- [ ] 1 large onion, roughly chopped
- [ ] 2 cups chopped fresh parsley
- [ ] 4 tbsp chopped fresh mint
- [ ] ¼ cup whole-wheat flour
- [ ] 2 tsp garlic powder
- [ ] 2 tsp ground cumin
- [ ] 2 tsp ground coriander seed
- [ ] ½ tsp black pepper
- [ ] ⅓ tsp salt, in the falafel
- [ ] 2 tbsp olive oil, for the hot pan and the tops
- [ ] 4 large whole-wheat pitas (6½-inch, 64 g each, 256 g in all)

Method

1. The night before, cover the dry chickpeas with at least 3 inches of cold water in a big bowl and put them in the fridge for 18 to 24 hours. They roughly triple in volume. Do not use canned ones: they are already cooked and the mix turns to paste.

2. Drain the chickpeas well and spread them on a clean towel. Pat them dry; wet chickpeas make a loose mix.

3. Heat the oven to 425 °F, with a rimmed sheet pan inside. Oven temperatures are not affected by altitude (CSU Extension, High Altitude Food Preparation), so this is the same at 5,300 ft.

- [ ] 1 container (6 oz / 170 g) nonfat plain Greek yogurt, for the sauce
- [ ] 3 tbsp tahini, stirred well, for the sauce
- [ ] juice of 1 lemon, for the sauce
- [ ] ¼ tsp garlic powder, for the sauce
- [ ] 0 tsp salt, in the sauce
- [ ] 2 medium tomatoes, diced
- [ ] 2 cups sliced cucumber
- [ ] Water for soaking the chickpeas (about 6 cups, drained off)
- [ ] 2 tbsp cold water, to thin the sauce

4. In a food processor, pulse the chickpeas, onion, parsley, mint, garlic powder, cumin, coriander, pepper and the salt for the falafel in 2 or 3 batches, until the mix looks like coarse, damp sand and still holds in your fist. Do not make a paste. Stir in the flour.

5. Divide the mix into 16 equal lumps and press each into a patty about ½ inch thick, with your hands.

6. Carefully take the hot pan out, pour on 1 tbsp of the oil and tilt to spread it, then lay the patties on it; they should sizzle. Brush the tops with the other tbsp of oil.

7. Bake 12 minutes, flip once, and bake 8 to 10 minutes more, until both sides are deep golden brown and a patty feels firm. The inside should read 165 °F on a thermometer (our kitchen practice: we hold raw-soaked bean patties to the same mark as leftovers).

8. While they bake, stir the yogurt, tahini, lemon juice, garlic powder, the sauce salt and the 2 tbsp water together until smooth; add water by the teaspoon only if it will not pour. Dice the tomatoes and slice the cucumber.

9 Warm the pitas in the oven for the last 2 minutes. Cut each one open and fill with 4 falafel, a quarter of the tomato and cucumber, and a quarter of the sauce (about ⅓ cup).

10 Leftovers: cool the falafel and the sauce, store them apart, and refrigerate within 2 hours (1 hour if it is above 90 °F; CDC). Reheat falafel to 165 °F. Packed cold for lunch, keep them in a cooler with plenty of ice (USDA FSIS).