RECIPE

Strained yogurt spread with olive oil, sesame-thyme blend and cucumber

A thick, tangy snack of strained low-fat yogurt (labneh) with olive oil, a toasted sesame and thyme blend, cucumber and whole-wheat pita; about 300 mg sodium and 2.6 g saturated fat a serving.

MAKES

6 servings US Metric

TOTAL

24 h 20 min

Ingredients

- [ ] 4 cups plain low-fat yogurt
- [ ] 0 tsp salt
- [ ] 2 tbsp olive oil
- [ ] 2 tbsp sesame seeds
- [ ] 1 tbsp dried thyme leaves
- [ ] 2 tsp grated lemon zest
- [ ] 1 large cucumber, sliced, for dipping
- [ ] 3 whole-wheat pitas (64 g each; 192 g), cut in wedges

Method

1. Set a sieve over a deep bowl and lay a clean, thin cotton kitchen towel inside it, with the edges hanging over the rim. Spoon in the yogurt and stir in the salt.

2. Fold the towel edges over the yogurt, set a small plate on top and rest a full can on the plate. Move the whole bowl to the refrigerator.

3. Leave it for 18 to 24 hours. The whey runs into the bowl, and the yogurt left in the towel turns thick, like soft cream cheese, about half its first weight (about 490 g). Pour the whey away.

4 While it drains, toast the sesame seeds in a dry skillet over medium heat for 3 minutes, stirring, until they are pale gold. Cool them, then crush them lightly with the back of a spoon and mix with the thyme and lemon zest. That is the za'atar-style blend. Sumac is the usual third part; we leave it out (no counted row), and the zest adds the sour note.

5 Scrape the labneh into a shallow bowl, smooth it with the back of a spoon and make a shallow well. Pour in the olive oil and scatter the blend over it.

6 Serve with the cucumber slices and the pita wedges. Refrigerate leftovers within 2 hours (1 hour above 90 °F). Eat within 5 days (our kitchen practice; we hold no published source for it yet).