Sauces / Lebanon

Baba Ganoush

Whole eggplants scorched directly over open flame until the skin is ash-black and the interior collapses into a trembling, smoke-perfumed custard — then folded with tahini, lemon, and garlic into a dip that tastes like the fire itself.

Time 60 min **Servings** 4

What you'll need.

- ☐ 2 whole Large globe eggplants
- ☐ 3 tbsp Tahini (raw sesame paste)
- ☐ 3 tbsp Fresh lemon juice
- ☐ 2 cloves Garlic cloves, raw
- ☐ 1 tsp Fine sea salt
- ☐ 2 tbsp Extra-virgin olive oil
- ☐ 2 tbsp Flat-leaf parsley, roughly chopped
- ☐ 0.25 tsp Ground cumin

Let's make it.

01 Place the whole, uncut eggplants directly on the grate of a gas burner over the highest flame. If you have an electric stove, use the broiler on its highest setting with the eggplants 5 cm from the element, turning every 5 minutes. On a gas flame, the eggplants will hiss, pop, and weep — this is the moisture escaping and it is exactly right. Using long tongs, turn the eggplants every 3-4 minutes so that all sides char evenly. The outer skin should become completely matte-black and begin to crack and peel back. This takes 15-20 minutes total. Do not rush it: the deep char is the source of the smoky complexity that defines baba ganoush — a pale, oven-blistered eggplant makes a good dip but not this one. When the eggplant collapses and yields to tong pressure at the center, it is done.

02 Place the charred eggplants in a colander over a bowl and let them steam-cool for 15 minutes — patience here prevents watery baba ganoush. Once cool enough to handle, peel back the charred skin with your hands, using a spoon to scrape off any stubborn black bits. Do not rinse the flesh under water — you will wash away the smoke. Some small specks of char in the flesh are authentic and desirable. Place the peeled flesh in the colander and use a fork to shred it into long strands, allowing more liquid to drain away. If the flesh is very wet, fold it in a clean kitchen towel and squeeze gently. The more liquid you remove, the more concentrated the final dip. Roughly chop or mash the flesh on the cutting board — the texture should remain somewhat coarse, not completely smooth.

03 Crush the garlic cloves to a paste with the flat of a knife and a pinch of salt — this releases the allicin and tames the raw bite. Add the garlic paste, tahini, lemon juice, cumin, and salt to the eggplant. Fold everything together with a fork, leaving the texture pleasingly rough rather than blended smooth. Taste aggressively: the dip should be simultaneously smoky, nutty (from tahini), bright (from lemon), garlicky, and savory. If it tastes flat, add salt. If it tastes bitter, add lemon. If the tahini is overwhelming, add another tablespoon of lemon. The tahini will seize and thicken when lemon is added — this is correct. Fold rather than stir, preserving the eggplant's fibrous texture. Rest for at least 15 minutes before serving so the flavors integrate fully.

04 Spoon the baba ganoush into a wide, shallow bowl and use the back of the spoon to create a sweeping well in the center. Drizzle generously with the best olive oil you have — it will pool in the well and run through the valleys of the dip's textured surface. Scatter the chopped parsley over the top. Serve at room temperature with fresh pita, vegetables, or as part of a mezze spread. Baba ganoush is always better the day it is made — the smoke dissipates overnight and what was vibrant becomes merely competent.

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Servings are an estimate; check quantities in the source recipe.
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