Sauces / Egypt

Dukkah

A coarsely ground Egyptian blend of toasted hazelnuts, sesame, coriander, and cumin — fragrant, crunchy, and complex, served with oil and bread for dipping or scattered over eggs and vegetables.

Time 30 min **Servings** 4

What you'll need.

- [ ] 40 parts Raw hazelnuts (skinless or skin-on)
- [ ] 30 parts White sesame seeds
- [ ] 15 parts Whole coriander seeds
- [ ] 10 parts Whole cumin seeds
- [ ] 3 parts Whole black peppercorns
- [ ] 4 parts Flaky sea salt
- [ ] 2 parts Dried thyme

Let's make it.

01 Spread the hazelnuts in a single layer in a dry skillet over medium heat. Toast, shaking the pan every 30 seconds, for 5 to 7 minutes until the skins are blistered and cracking and the nuts beneath are a deep golden brown. If using skin-on hazelnuts, tip into a clean kitchen towel, wrap and rub vigorously to remove most of the skin. Some skin remaining is fine and adds bitterness. Spread on a plate to cool completely before grinding.

02 Toast the sesame seeds, coriander, cumin, and peppercorns separately — each has a different size and density, so they hit perfect doneness at different moments. Sesame seeds first: 2 to 3 minutes in a dry pan, shaking constantly, until golden and jumping. Then coriander and cumin together: 2 to 3 minutes until they smell warm and the coriander seeds just begin to colour. Peppercorns last: 1 minute until fragrant. Cool each completely before combining.

03 Combine all the cooled toasted ingredients in a mortar with the flaky salt and dried thyme. Pound with a circular grinding motion — not a smooth blending action, but an intermittent crush. You want a coarse, uneven, rubble-like texture: some hazelnut pieces remain pea-sized, some sesame is whole, some spice is powdered. The contrast between fine spice dust and whole sesame and nut chunks is what makes dukkah. Alternatively, pulse 3 to 5 times in a food processor — do not run it continuously or you will produce hazelnut butter.

04 Taste the dukkah directly, then taste it again dipped in a little good olive oil. The oil amplifies all the flavours and reveals the balance: you should get the warmth of coriander and cumin up front, a gentle bitterness from the hazelnut skins, and a lingering sesame nuttiness. Add more salt if it tastes muted; the flaky salt also adds textural pops that fine salt cannot replicate. Store in an airtight jar at room temperature for up to 3 weeks, or refrigerate for up to 2 months.

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