Sauces

Tahini Sauce

Raw sesame paste thinned with lemon juice and cold water until it loosens, pales, and brightens into something altogether silkier than its starting point — nutty, sour, and creamy in equal measure.

Time 10 min **Servings** 4

What you'll need.

- ☐ 100 parts Tahini (well-stirred, stone-ground preferred)
- ☐ 45 parts Fresh lemon juice
- ☐ 5 parts Garlic clove, grated to a paste
- ☐ 60 parts Ice-cold water
- ☐ 3 parts Fine sea salt
- ☐ 2 parts Ground cumin (optional)

Let's make it.

01 Open the tahini jar and stir it thoroughly from the bottom up before measuring — tahini separates in storage, and you need a fully recombined paste, not the dry paste at the bottom with the separated oil on top. Transfer the required amount to a mixing bowl. The tahini at this point should be a uniform, thick, peanut-butter-brown paste with a strong sesame aroma. If the tahini is very stiff or cold, the sauce will be harder to whisk smooth — room temperature tahini works best.

02 Add the lemon juice all at once to the tahini and whisk immediately. The mixture will seize dramatically — it will thicken and seize into a stiff, pale, crumbly-looking mass. This is expected and not a failure. It is the same reaction as seizing chocolate: the acid is disrupting the fat emulsion and binding the solids. Add the grated garlic paste, salt, and cumin (if using) and whisk them into the seized mass. The mixture will look broken and unappetizing — resist the urge to add anything else yet.

03 Add the ice-cold water one tablespoon at a time, whisking vigorously after each addition. With each addition the sauce will first appear to loosen further before pulling back together — this is normal. Continue until the sauce is smooth, silky, and falls off the whisk in a slow, unbroken ribbon. The sauce should be noticeably pale — an almost off-white cream color — significantly lighter than the raw tahini. Taste and adjust: more lemon for brightness, more water for a looser consistency, more salt to bring everything forward.

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