



Gratz Insider, January 2017 - Story Continuation

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The Gratz Gourmet

“There’s something transcendent about the perfect bowl of hummus that tells our guests they’re in the right place,” says Solomonov in his book [ZAHAV: A World of Israeli Cooking](#), co-written with his business partner, Steven Cook (p.38). The book intersperses recipes and personal narratives with photos so lifelike that readers can almost taste the Israeli delicacies through the pages.

“ZAHAV” was selected as this year’s [One Book One Jewish Community](#) (OBOJC) choice. With the goal of enhancing Jewish literacy and community interconnectedness, OBOJC is the largest program of its kind in the United States. Once the OBOJC Implementation Team selects a book, events are planned around that book at synagogues and other Jewish institutions throughout the year. Gratz College’s Mindy Blechman has been a member of the OBOJC Implementation Team since its inception in 2007.

In the book “ZAHAV,” Solomonov describes hummus as “the dish that brings people to the restaurant in the first place. And more often than not, it is what brings them back (p.38).” The hummus options on the restaurant’s menu include Hummus Tehina, Hummus Tehina with selected toppings, and Turkish Hummus. As the name suggests, the primary ingredient in Hummus Tehina is tehina, or as Solomonov explains it, “the secret to great Israeli-style hummus is an obscene amount of tehina (p.39).” *Tehina* is the Israeli name for what is more commonly referred to by its Greek name, *tahini*. Below is the recipe from the book for Solomonov’s Basic Tehina Sauce, which he uses in his hummus.



Michael Solomonov making Hummus Tehina on an episode of “The Chef’s Kitchen.”

Basic Tehina Sauce

1 head garlic
¾ cup lemon juice (from 3 lemons)
1 ½ teaspoons kosher salt
2 generous cups tehina
½ teaspoon ground cumin

1. Break up the head of garlic with your hands, letting the unpeeled cloves fall into a blender. Add the lemon juice and ½ teaspoon of the salt. Blend on high for a few seconds until you have a coarse puree. Let the mixture stand for 10 minutes to let the garlic mellow.

2. Pour the mixture through a fine-mesh strainer set over a large mixing bowl, pressing on the solids to extract as much liquid as possible. Discard the solids. Add the tehina to the strained lemon juice in the bowl, along with the cumin and 1 teaspoon of the salt.
3. Whisk the mixture together until smooth (or use a food processor), adding ice water, a few tablespoons at a time, to thin it out. The sauce will lighten in color as you whisk. When the tehina seizes up or tightens, keep adding ice water, bit by bit (about 1 ½ cups in total), whisking energetically until you have a perfectly smooth, creamy, thick sauce.
4. Taste and add up to 1 ½ teaspoons more salt and cumin if you'd like.
5. If you're not using the sauce immediately, whisk in a few tablespoons of ice water to loosen it before refrigerating. The tehina sauce will keep for a week refrigerated, or it can be frozen for up to a month.

Makes about 4 cups.

With the tehina sauce prepared, you're now ready to make hummus. Below is the recipe for Solomonov's celebrated Hummus Tehina. Although the chef recommends the use of dried chickpeas that are soaked in water and baking soda overnight and then cooked, as described in the recipe, it is possible to use canned chickpeas if you're short on time. For a visual, [here](#) is a video of Michael Solomonov making his Basic Tehina Sauce and hummus on an episode of "The Chef's Kitchen."

Hummus Tehina

1 cup dried chickpeas
2 teaspoons baking soda
1 ½ cups Basic Tehina Sauce, plus a bit more for the topping
1 teaspoon kosher salt
¼ teaspoon ground cumin
Paprika
Chopped fresh parsley
Olive oil, for drizzling

1. Place the chickpeas in a large bowl with 1 teaspoon of the baking soda and cover with water. (The chickpeas will double in volume, so use more water than you think you need.) Soak the chickpeas overnight at room temperature. The next day, drain the chickpeas and rinse under cold water.
2. Place the chickpeas in a large pot with the remaining 1 teaspoon of baking soda, and add cold water to cover by at least 4 inches. Bring the chickpeas to a boil over high heat, skimming off any scum that rises to the surface. Lower the heat to medium, cover the pot and continue to simmer for about 1 hour, until the chickpeas are completely tender. Then simmer them a little more. (The secret to creamy hummus is overcooked chickpeas; don't worry if they are mushy and falling apart a little.) Drain.

3. Combine the chickpeas, Basic Tehina Sauce, salt and cumin in a food processor. Puree the hummus for several minutes until it is smooth and uber-creamy. Then puree it some more!

4. To serve, spread the hummus in a shallow bowl, dust with paprika, top with parsley and more Basic Tehina Sauce if you'd like, and drizzle generously with oil.

Makes 3 ½ cups.

**Recipes from “ZAHAV: A World of Israeli Cooking” by Michael Solomonov and Steven Cook.
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