

Hummmus With Pita Chips

This is a classic standard that changes a little each time I make it. As with so many of my recipes, I start with a basic formula and adjust it to the mood of my taste buds. The pita chips are a little bit of a hassle, but they're really worth it.

HUMMMUS

4 cups canned garbanzo beans (chick-peas), drained

¼ cup tahini (sesame paste)

1/3 cup warm water

1/3 cup extra virgin olive oil

juice of 2 to 3 lemons

3 garlic cloves

1 teaspoons salt

1 teaspoon ground cumin seed

freshly ground pepper to taste

PITA CHIPS

1 package of 8" white pita bread (about 12 pieces)

8 tablespoons butter (1 stick)

½ teaspoon salt

2 cloves garlic, chopped

HUMMUS

Put the chickpeas in a food processor fitted with a steel blade. Process for a few seconds, then add the olive oil, juice of 1 lemon, and warm water. When smooth, add the tahini and process until incorporated.

Use a garlic press to mash the garlic, and add it, the cumin seed, salt and pepper. Process and taste. Add more lemon juice and adjust seasoning to taste. Scrape into a storage container, cover, and refrigerate until ready to use.

PITA CHIPS

Preheat oven to 350.

Melt butter in a small sauce pan over low heat. Add garlic and salt, cover, and let it sit over low heat until the garlic is soft.

Each pita will yield 12 chips. Because it is hollow, you treat it as if it were two. I cut it into pie-shaped wedges that become two chips. This is how:

Lay a piece of pita flat, cut in half, and open the pocket being careful not to tear the bread or split it in two. Lay the halves flat, and cut into thirds, open them up, and cut at the fold. Baste both sides with the garlic butter, and put them crust side down on cookie sheets. Bake until the tops are golden and the chips are crisp. Let them cool, and put them in an airtight container until you're ready to serve.