

Cauliflower Shawarma With Spicy Tahini

By Melissa Clark

Total Time 45 minutes

Rating ★★★★★ (5,981)

In this vegetarian take on shawarma, the usual spiced lamb, chicken or turkey is replaced with cauliflower florets and onion wedges that have been tossed with a classic combination of cumin, paprika and coriander, then roasted until browned, fragrant and very tender. A hot sauce-spiked tahini served alongside lends creaminess and heat. To serve it, you can tuck everything into a pita or flatbread, or keep the bread on the side and let everyone assemble their own sandwiches at the table. Chopped cucumber, tomatoes and olives are optional, but they add a juicy brightness to contrast with the aromatic, roasted flavors. (Watch the video of [Melissa Clark making cauliflower shawarma with spicy tahini here.](#))

INGREDIENTS

Yield: 2 servings

FOR THE CAULIFLOWER

5 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, plus more as needed
1½ teaspoons ground cumin
1¼ teaspoons sweet paprika
¾ teaspoon fine sea or table salt, plus more as needed
1 teaspoon ground coriander
¼ teaspoon ground turmeric
¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
Pinch of ground cayenne
1 large head cauliflower (about 2½ pounds), trimmed and cut into bite-size florets

PREPARATION

Step 1

Arrange racks in the upper and lower thirds of your oven. Heat oven to 425 degrees.

Step 2

Prepare the cauliflower: In a large bowl, whisk together olive oil, cumin, paprika, salt, coriander, turmeric, black pepper and cayenne. Add cauliflower and onion, and toss until well coated. Spread mixture in a single layer on a rimmed baking sheet.

Step 3

Roast vegetables on the top oven rack until they are golden brown, slightly crisp and tender, 30 to 40 minutes, stirring once or twice. If the vegetables look dry as they roast, drizzle with a little more olive oil.

Step 4

1 large red onion, cut into $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch wedges

Pita or flatbread, for serving

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup coarsely chopped parsley, plus more for serving

Chopped tomato, cucumber and olives, for serving

FOR THE SPICY TAHINI SAUCE

1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice, plus more to taste

1 to 2 teaspoons harissa paste or other hot sauce, or a large pinch of Urfa or Aleppo pepper, plus more to taste

1 fat garlic clove, finely grated, passed through a press or minced

$\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon fine sea or table salt

$\frac{1}{3}$ cup tahini

$\frac{1}{3}$ cup ice water, plus more as needed

As they cook, prepare the tahini sauce: Whisk together lemon juice, 1 teaspoon harissa, garlic and salt in a small bowl, and let sit for a minute or two to mellow the garlic. Whisk in tahini. Whisk in ice water, 1 tablespoon at a time, until the sauce is smooth and thin enough to drizzle. You may not need all of the water or you may need to add a little more: Tahini brands vary a lot. Taste and adjust seasoning, adding more harissa, lemon juice and salt if you like. The sauce should taste zippy and creamy.

Step 5

Warm the pitas or flatbread by placing them directly on the bottom oven rack during the last 5 minutes as the vegetables roast. (Or you can warm the bread on another baking pan if that's easier for you.)

Step 6

Scatter parsley on top of the roasted vegetables and serve with warm pitas, tahini sauce, chopped tomato, cucumber and olives.

Private Notes

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