



Exploring the Fascinating History of Food - TheShiksa.com

Falafel

Servings: 30-34 falafels

Kosher Key: Pareve

INGREDIENTS

1 pound (about 2 cups) dry chickpeas/garbanzo beans
1 small onion, roughly chopped
1/4 cup chopped fresh parsley
3-5 cloves garlic (I prefer roasted)
1 1/2 tbsp flour
1 3/4 tsp salt
2 tsp cumin
1 tsp ground coriander
1/4 tsp black pepper
1/4 tsp cayenne pepper
Pinch of ground cardamom
Vegetable oil for frying (grapeseed, canola, and peanut oil work well)

YOU WILL ALSO NEED

Food processor, skillet

Pour the chickpeas into a large bowl and cover them by about 3 inches of cold water. Let them soak overnight. They will double in size as they soak – you will have between 4 and 5 cups of beans after soaking.

Drain and rinse the garbanzo beans well. Pour them into your food processor along with the chopped onion, garlic cloves, parsley, flour, salt, cumin, ground coriander, black pepper, cayenne pepper, and cardamom.

Pulse all ingredients together until a rough, coarse meal forms. Scrape the sides of the processor periodically and push the mixture down the sides. Do not over-process or create a paste; you want it similar to the texture of couscous.

Once the mixture reaches the desired consistency, pour it out into a bowl and use a fork to stir; this will make the texture more even throughout. Remove any large chickpea chunks that the processor missed.

Cover the bowl with plastic wrap and refrigerate for 1-2 hours.

Note: Some people like to add baking soda to the mix to lighten up the texture inside of the falafel balls. I don't usually add it, since the falafel is generally pretty fluffy on its own. If you would like to add it, dissolve 2 tsp of baking soda in 1 tbsp of water and mix it into the falafel mixture after it has been refrigerated.

Fill a skillet with vegetable oil to a depth of 1 ½ inches. I prefer to use cooking oil with a high smoke point, like grapeseed. Heat the oil slowly over medium heat. Meanwhile, form falafel mixture into round balls or slider-shaped patties using wet hands or a falafel scoop. I usually use about 2 tbsp of mixture per falafel. You can make them smaller or larger depending on your personal preference. The balls will stick together loosely at first, but will bind nicely once they begin to fry. If the mixture seems too loose and falls apart, stir a little more flour into the mix.

Before frying my first batch of falafels, I like to fry a test one in the center of the pan. If the oil is at the right temperature, it will take 2-3 minutes per side to brown (5-6 minutes total). If it browns faster than that, your oil is too hot and your falafels will not be fully cooked in the center. Cool the oil down slightly and try again. When the oil is at the right temperature, fry the falafels in batches of 5-6 at a time till golden brown on both sides.

Once the falafels are fried, remove them from the oil using a slotted spoon.

Let them drain on paper towels. Serve the falafels fresh and hot; they go best with a plate of hummus and topped with creamy tahini sauce. You can also stuff them into a pita.

SESAME FALAFEL VARIATION: After forming the balls or patties, dip them in sesame seeds prior to frying. This will make the falafel coating crunchier and give it a slightly nutty flavor.

HERB FALAFEL VARIATION (GREEN FALAFEL): Add ½ cup additional chopped green parsley, or cilantro, or a mixture of the two prior to blending.

TURMERIC FALAFEL (YELLOW FALAFEL): Add ¾ tsp turmeric to the food processor prior to blending.

EGYPTIAN FALAFEL: Use 1 lb. dried peeled fava beans instead of chickpeas; cover them with cold water, soak them for at least 24 hours, then drain and rinse. You can also use a mixture of fava beans and chickpeas if you wish; just make sure the weight of the dried beans adds up to 1 lb.

After the beans are soaked and rinsed, add the Classic Falafel ingredients to the processor along with the following ingredients – 1 leek, cleaned, trimmed, and quartered; ¼ cup chopped dill; ¼ cup chopped cilantro; and an additional ¾ tsp cayenne pepper. When mixture is processed to a coarse meal, pour into a bowl. Stir 2 ½ tbsp sesame seeds into the mixture with a fork until it's evenly dispersed throughout the mixture. Refrigerate and proceed with frying. If mixture seems too “wet” when making the falafel balls, add additional flour by the teaspoonful until the mixture sticks together better. Continue with frying.

HOW TO MAKE A FALAFEL PITA: Making a falafel pita is actually really simple. The two main ingredients are pita bread and falafel.

Cut the pita bread in half to form two “pockets.” Each pocket is a serving size. Stuff the pocket with falafel, as well as any add-ons you fancy.

Here are some traditional add-ons that can be added to your pita; these are the ingredients most widely available at falafel stands throughout Israel:

- Tahini sauce
- Shredded lettuce
- Diced or sliced tomatoes
- Israeli salad
- Onions
- Dill pickles
- Hummus
- Tabouli
- French fries

Here are some less traditional add-ons that are also tasty:

- Sprouts
- Cucumber slices
- Roasted peppers
- Roasted eggplant slices
- Sunflower seeds
- Feta cheese
- Yogurt
- Tzatziki

For food photographs and step-by-step instructions, please visit <http://www.theshiksa.com>.

© 2013 The Shiksa Blog All Rights Reserved