

Tahini Sauce

Swick

Makes 4 cups | Active Time: 20 minutes | Total Time: 30 minutes

Step 1: Gathering Your Mise en Place

- 1 head garlic, broken up, unpeeled
 - 3/4 cup fresh lemon juice (3 to 5 lemons)
 - 1/2 tsp sea salt
 - 1 - 500 ml jar raw tahini (approx. 1 3/4 cup)
- For the garlic, simply break the head up, leaving the outer skin on the cloves.
- While you may be thinking that a whole head of garlic is A LOT of garlic, since it's just the garlic juice/oil, it is actually surprisingly quite mellow in the final sauce.

Step 2: Preparing the Lemon-Garlic Juice

To prepare the lemon-garlic mixture, add the cloves, along with the lemon juice and salt to a high-speed blender.

To start, pulse the mixture for a few seconds to break up the cloves a bit. Then, turn up the speed and blend until the mixture has a coarse purée-like consistency. Let the mixture sit for approximately 10 minutes to infuse the lemon with the garlic.

Next, pour the garlic mixture through a fine-mesh strainer set over a large mixing bowl.

At this point, pour 1/2 cup of water into the blender and pulse a few times—this will help to remove the remaining garlic-lemon juice from the blender. Pour this water-garlic mixture through the strainer and let drain.

Once most of the liquid has drained, press the solids with the back of a spatula to help extract as much of the liquid as possible. Once done, discard the solids.

Step 3: Preparing the Sauce

- 1/2 tsp ground cumin, or to taste
- 1 to 1 1/2 tsp sea salt, as needed
- 1 1/2 to 2 cups cold water, as needed

To prepare the sauce, add the tahini paste to the lemon-garlic juice, along with the cumin and about a teaspoon of the salt.

Carefully whisk the mixture together. Once combined, start to add cold water, a few tablespoons at a time. At first, the mixture will be very thick—as you add the water it will start to thin out and lighten in color. As soon as the sauce starts to seize up, add a few more tablespoons of water and continue to whisk.

Continue to whisk and add water until you have reached a somewhat thick, creamy-smooth sauce. Ultimately, the final thickness depends on how you will be using the sauce. A thinner sauce will obviously be more pourable and sauce-like, where a thicker sauce (think of hummus consistency) can be used as a spread or dip. A thicker sauce can essentially be used in the same way that hummus would be used.

Note: Alternatively, the sauce can be made in the blender—which is often how we do it. If making a thicker sauce, you may need to stop and start the blender several times during blending.

Step 4: Finishing the Sauce

To finish the sauce, taste for seasoning—adding more salt, lemon juice, and/or cumin as desired.

Note: If making the sauce ahead, add an extra tablespoon or so of water to thin down the sauce a bit before refrigerating.

This sauce will keep for about a week in the refrigerator, or it can be frozen for several weeks.

Serve this sauce with any number of dishes—such as Falafels, Middle-Eastern Roasted Cauliflower, Moroccan Roasted Carrots and the list goes on. This sauce is a great way to brighten many dishes and add flavor to things like simple steamed vegetables—without any added fat. Seriously, the next time you steam broccoli toss it with a bit of this sauce and you will be amazed at the results.

Chef's Notes

This recipe was inspired by *Zahav: A World of Israeli Cooking*, by Michael Solomonov and Steven Cook.