

MUHAMMARA

Muhammara is a classic Levantine dip made with roasted red peppers and walnuts. Usually thickened with bread, Chef Kurt uses cooked red lentils instead. Use a food processor if you want a smooth texture. For more texture, use a mortar and pestle.

Corporate Chef Kurt Kwiatkowski

Featured Food: Red Peppers

Yield: Makes about 2 cups, 4 to 6 servings as a dip

Ingredients

3 medium red bell peppers	2 t red pepper flakes
½ c red lentils	1 c walnuts, toasted
1 T lemon juice	¼ c diced white onion
1 T ground cumin	2-4 T extra virgin olive oil
2 t kosher salt	2 T chopped fresh cilantro
1 ½ T pomegranate molasses (available at Middle Eastern groceries)	Salt and pepper, to taste

Preparation

Roast red peppers, wrap in paper towel and set aside to cool. When peppers are cool, remove the skin and seeds and discard. Cut the roasted pepper flesh into quarters.

Rinse lentils and cook in saucepan with water to cover the lentils. Simmer for 12 to 15 minutes. Drain.

Place roasted peppers, cooked lentils, lemon juice, cumin, salt, molasses, red pepper flakes, walnuts, and onion in bowl of food processor. Process until smooth. With food processor running, drizzle in olive oil. To thin out the product even more, drizzle in more olive oil a tablespoon at a time. Add cilantro to bowl and pulse until herb is chopped and distributed in the dip.

Cover and refrigerate. Flavor improves with a day in the fridge. When ready to serve, bring to room temperature. Drizzle with olive oil and garnish with a sprinkle of walnuts and a few leaves of cilantro.

Serve with pita bread, pita chips, or fresh vegetables. Delicious as a sandwich spread or as a pesto-like sauce tossed with freshly cooked pasta.