



Egyptian Farm-tastic Falafel on a Stick with Cool-as-a-Cucumber Tahini Sauce

By Erin Fletter

Prep Time 20 / **Cook Time** 6 / **Serves** 4 - 6

Fun-Da-Mentals Kitchen Skills

knife skills: Bear Claw (growl), Pinch, Plank, and Bridge (look out for trolls).

mash: to reduce food, like potatoes or bananas, to a soft, pulpy state by beating or pressure.

mince: to chop into teeny tiny pieces.

peel: to remove the skin or rind from something using your hands or a metal tool.

chop: to cut something into small, rough pieces using a blade.

grate: to reduce food, like a carrot, to very small shreds or pieces of the same size by rubbing it on a tool with an outside surface that has holes with cutting edges (a grater).

Equipment

- ☐ Nonstick skillet
- ☐ Can opener
- ☐ Large mixing bowl
- ☐ Measuring spoons
- ☐ Dry measuring cups
- ☐ Cutting board
- ☐ Kid-safe knife
- ☐ Citrus juicer (optional)
- ☐ Potato masher (or immersion blender)

- ☐ Heat-resistant spatula
- ☐ Toothpicks or ice pop sticks
- ☐ Grater
- ☐ Medium mixing bowl

Ingredients

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☐ Falafel:

- ☐ 2 15-oz cans chickpeas (garbanzo beans), drained ****(for CHICKPEA ALLERGY sub black or pinto beans if tolerated)****
- ☐ 2 tsp salt
- ☐ 1 tsp ground black pepper
- ☐ 2 tsp ground coriander
- ☐ 2 tsp ground cumin
- ☐ 1/4 C all-purpose flour ****(for GLUTEN ALLERGY sub gluten-free/nut-free all-purpose flour)****
- ☐ 1 garlic clove
- ☐ 1 handful fresh parsley
- ☐ 1 small lemon
- ☐ 2 green onions
- ☐ 3 to 4 T vegetable oil ******

☐ Sauce:

- ☐ 1 cucumber
- ☐ 1 Granny Smith apple
- ☐ 1 handful fresh mint
- ☐ 1 C plain yogurt ****(for DAIRY ALLERGY sub dairy-free/nut-free plain yogurt)****
- ☐ 2 tsp tahini ****(Omit for SESAME ALLERGY)****
- ☐ 1 tsp salt, to taste
- ☐ 1/2 tsp ground black pepper, to taste

Food Allergen Substitutions

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Chickpea: Substitute canned black or pinto beans, if tolerated, for canned garbanzo beans (chickpeas).

Gluten/Wheat: Substitute gluten-free/nut-free all-purpose flour.

Soy: Substitute canola oil or other nut-free high-smoking point oil (can heat to a higher temperature without smoking) for vegetable oil.

Dairy: Substitute dairy-free/nut-free plain yogurt.

Sesame: Omit Tahini in Sauce.

Instructions

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peel + measure

We'll start with the falafel! Drain **2 cans of garbanzo beans**, then have kids 'pop' the skins off of them, discarding the skins. In a large mixing bowl, combine the peeled garbanzo beans with **2 teaspoons salt** and **1 teaspoon black pepper**. Next, measure out **2 teaspoons coriander** and **2 teaspoons cumin** and add to the bowl.

sprinkle + toss

Sprinkle **1/4 cup of flour** over the garbanzo bean mixture. Toss everything in the bowl together and set it to the side.

mince + squeeze + dice

Mince **1 garlic clove** finely, along with a handful of fresh parsley, and add to the bowl. Squeeze the juice of **1 lemon** into the bowl and dice up **2 green onions**. Mix to combine everything well.

mash + roll + flatten

Mash the garbanzo bean mixture using a potato masher or immersion blender, making sure everything gets very well combined, resulting in a thick paste. Roll the mixture into small balls about the size of a ping-pong ball. Slightly flatten the balls.

fry + pierce

Heat a nonstick skillet on your stovetop over medium-high heat. Add a few tablespoons of vegetable oil to the bottom of your skillet, and then fry up your falafel for 2 to 3 minutes per side, until crispy and golden brown. Let them cool slightly and pierce them with toothpicks or ice pop sticks to serve. Enjoy with the Cucumber Tahini sauce!

grate + squeeze

Now, we'll make the tahini sauce! Using a cheese grater, grate **1 cucumber** into a medium bowl. Pick up the grated cucumber in clean hands and squeeze out the excess liquid. Discard liquid and put the grated cucumber back into the bowl.

chop + tear + combine

Chop up **1 apple** (with the skin on) into small chunks. Then, tear up **1 handful of fresh mint** into small bits. Combine the cucumber, apple, and mint in the bowl.

measure + whisk

Measure **1 cup of yogurt** and **2 teaspoons of tahini** and add to the cucumber mixture. Whisk the cucumber dip until smooth. Add **salt and black pepper** to taste and serve with the Falafels on a stick!

Featured Ingredient: Cucumber!

Hi! I'm Cucumber!

"I'm as cool as a cucumber. Actually, I am a cucumber! I have a thick, dark green peel; I am longer than I am wide; and I am a fruit that's often used as a veggie! There are three types of cucumbers: slicing, pickling, and burpless. The slicing and burpless varieties, with or without their peels, are tasty and refreshing sliced, chopped, or minced in salads, sandwiches, salsa, sauces, appetizers, and smoothies or other drinks. The pickling cucumber eventually becomes a pickle (after its pickling spa treatment)!"

History & Etymology

Cucumbers are one of the oldest known cultivated vegetables. They have been grown for at least 3,000 years and are believed to have originated in India.

The early Greeks or Romans may have introduced cucumbers to Europe. Records indicate that the French cultivated them in the 9th century and the English in the 14th century. Then Spanish explorers brought cucumbers to the Americas in the 16th century.

Pickled cucumbers, or pickles, may have been produced first by workers building the Great Wall of China or by people in Mesopotamia's Tigris Valley.

A 1630 book called "New England's Plantation" by Francis Higginson, describing plants grown in a garden on Conant's Island in Boston Harbor, mentions "cowcumbers." The cucumber may have been dubbed cowcumber due to thinking at that time that uncooked vegetables were fit only for cows.

The word "cucumber" comes from late Middle English, from the Old French "cocombre," from the Latin "cucumis."

Anatomy

The cucumber is a creeping vine plant that is part of the Cucurbitaceae or gourd family. Other members are melon, squash, pumpkin, and watermelon. Cucumbers grow on a vine, often in sandy soil. Sandy soil warms faster in the spring, giving cucumbers a more favorable growing environment.

Cucumber length varies. Slicers are 6 to 8 inches, burpless 8 to 10 inches, and picklers are 3 to 5 inches long.

Cucumbers have a mild melon flavor. Slicing cucumbers will have seeds in their flesh, preferably small, soft seeds. Burpless cucumbers are slightly sweeter with a more tender skin and are easier to digest. They may also have no or very few seeds.

"Cool as a cucumber" isn't just a catchy phrase. A cucumber's inner temperature can be 10 to 20 degrees cooler than the outside air. This is because it consists mainly of water, which also applies to watermelons, and it takes more energy to heat the water inside the cucumber than the air around it. No wonder these are such summertime favorites! However, we don't say "as cool as a watermelon," so how did this expression become part of our vocabulary? It may have come from a poem in John Gay's *Poems, New Song on New Similes* from 1732.

How to Pick, Buy, & Eat

Cucumbers are ready to be harvested 50 to 70 days after planting. They are ripe when they are firm and bright or dark green. Slicing cucumbers will be six to eight inches long. Avoid leaving them on the vine too long, or their taste may become bitter and their rind tougher.

At the store, look for firm cucumbers without blemishes, wrinkles, or soft spots. Organic cucumbers are the best choice to avoid pesticide residue, if available. In addition, washing them reduces the amount of residue and pathogens.

If you don't eat your fresh, uncut cucumbers immediately, store them in your refrigerator crisper drawer in a plastic bag for up to three days if unwaxed and up to a week if waxed.

You can eat slicing and burpless cucumbers by themselves, slice or chop them into salads, or blend them into sauces and smoothies.

Pickling cucumbers are pickled whole or sliced in brine, sugar, vinegar, and spices. There are several kinds of pickles, such as sweet, bread-and-butter, gherkin, and kosher dill.

Nutrition

Cucumbers are 96 percent water, have very little fat, and are low in calories.

Cucumbers contain small amounts of the vitamins you need every day and 16 percent of the daily value of vitamin K, which helps with blood clotting.