

Muhammara
(Roasted Red Pepper and Walnut Dip)

Makes about 2 cups

This muhammara dip is made of roasted red peppers, earthy toasted walnuts, and freshly toasted bread-crumbs. All of these savory items are blended together with a few additional ingredients and one specialty item -- pomegranate molasses. The pomegranate molasses gives a special sweet and tangy depth to the dip -- so delicious!

Ingredients:

3 red peppers, halved and roasted
1 tablespoon olive oil for roasting peppers.
1/2 cup walnuts, lightly toasted
1/2 cup fine, freshly grated bread crumbs
(use dry bread, pulse in food processor to create a fine crumb, toast in pan with one tablespoon olive oil until just crispy)
2 tablespoons tomato paste
1 clove garlic, minced

1 tablespoon lemon juice
5 tablespoons olive oil
2 tablespoons pomegranate molasses*
1 teaspoon Kosher salt
1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper

Optional Garnishes:

10 walnut halves
Fresh parsley

Directions:

1. Preheat the oven to 450 degrees F.
2. Halve the peppers, de-seed, brush with olive oil, and place cut side down on a baking sheet. Roast the peppers until softened. Achieve some char on the peppers by broiling for a few minutes.
3. Place the roasted red peppers in a bowl, and cover for 10 minutes. After the peppers have cooled, carefully peel the skins off.
4. While the peppers are roasting, toast the walnuts. In a small dry skillet, toast the walnuts until just fragrant. Set the walnuts aside.
5. In the same skillet, toss the bread crumbs with one tablespoon of olive oil. Stir and heat until golden brown. Set the toasted bread crumbs aside.
6. Mince the garlic and juice the lemon.
7. Blend the roasted and peeled peppers, the toasted walnuts, breadcrumbs, tomato paste, garlic, lemon juice, olive oil, pomegranate molasses, Kosher salt, and cayenne pepper together until smooth. Taste and adjust the seasonings, as desired.
8. Garnish with a few walnuts, fresh parsley, and a drizzle of olive oil.

* **Ingredient Note:** Pomegranate molasses is a sweet, tangy, and thick syrup that adds an interesting sweet flavor to this dip. You can find Pomegranate Molasses in specialty grocery stores. A few good substitutions would be cranberry or pomegranate juice with a bit of sugar added and reduced down into a syrup or a flavored balsamic vinegar like raspberry balsamic sweetened with a little sugar.