

FOOD OF THE WEEK: TAHINI (SESAME BUTTER)

You may never have heard of tahini before, but chances are you've eaten it without knowing. Tahini (which is really just ground up sesame seeds) is used to make hummus, so if you've ever tried hummus at a party or gathering, then you've eaten tahini. It doesn't have too much flavor on its own, but it really adds a great texture to other dishes. It can sometimes be hard to find in the grocery store, but I usually can find it in the organic section. It's pricey (usually about \$8 for a jar), but if you're just using it to make hummus every month or so, then a jar should last you a long time (I think I've had the same jar for almost a year now). Sesame seeds have been shown to enhance the burning of fat, lower cholesterol, and are also high in protein, minerals, B vitamins, and fiber. Like peanut butter, tahini is high in heart-healthy monounsaturated fats. If you've only ever bought your hummus pre-made from the grocery store, you're missing out. Making your own hummus is super easy, and actually pretty fun, since once you get the basic ingredients in there, you can really just experiment and make any sort of flavored hummus that you desire. My personal favorites are pumpkin hummus, red pepper hummus (below), and black bean hummus. So give it a try, and have fun experimenting!



Get Cooking: Roasted Red Pepper Hummus



Ingredients:

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| 1 (15 oz) can of garbanzo beans | ½ tsp ground cumin |
| 1 (4 oz) jar of roasted red peppers | ½ tsp ground cayenne pepper |
| 3 Tbsp lemon juice | ½ tsp dried parsley |
| 1 ½ Tbsp tahini | Salt to taste |
| 3 cloves of minced garlic | Toasted pita chips or vegetables for dipping |

Directions:

1. In a food processor or blender, mix together the beans, peppers, lemon juice, tahini, garlic, and spices until the mixture is smooth. Transfer to a container and refrigerate for at least an hour.
2. Enjoy with chips or vegetables!