



muhammara

Made primarily of walnuts, this popular, spicy dip is usually served with toasted flat bread or chunks of crusty bread. It can also be served as a dip for raw vegetables, such as sticks of carrot and cucumber, and as an accompaniment to grilled, broiled or barbecued meats. Depending on where you are in Turkey, the ingredients may vary a little – mashed chickpeas or carrots may be used instead of bread, grated feta or yogurt may be added for a creamy texture, and garlic may be included in liberal quantities – but the general aim is to create a fiery dip spiked with Turkish red pepper or chillies. Arabic in origin, *muhammara* is traditionally made with pomegranate syrup, which actually tastes sour rather than sweet, but contemporary recipes often use lemon juice instead. The parsley leaves at the end help to cut the heat, so add more if you like.

175g/6oz/1 cup broken shelled walnuts

5ml/1 tsp cumin seeds, dry-roasted and ground

5–10ml/1–2 tsp Turkish red pepper, or 1–2 fresh red chillies, seeded and finely chopped, or 5ml/1 tsp chilli powder

1–2 garlic cloves (optional)

1 slice of day-old bread, sprinkled with water and left for a few minutes, then squeezed dry

15–30ml/1–2 tbsp tomato purée (paste)

5–10ml/1–2 tsp granulated sugar

30ml/2 tbsp pomegranate syrup or juice of 1 lemon

120ml/4fl oz/½ cup olive or sunflower oil, plus extra for serving

salt and ground black pepper

a few sprigs of fresh flat leaf parsley, to garnish

strips of pitta bread, to serve

SERVES 4–6

1 Using a mortar and pestle, pound the walnuts with the cumin seeds, red pepper or chilli and garlic (if using). Add the soaked bread and pound to a paste, then beat in the tomato purée, sugar and pomegranate syrup.

2 Now slowly drizzle in 120ml/4fl oz/½ cup oil, beating all the time until the paste is thick and light. Season with salt and pepper, and spoon into a bowl. Splash a little olive oil over the top to keep it moist, and garnish with parsley leaves. Serve at room temperature.

using a blender *If you have an electric blender you can make life easy and whiz all the ingredients together if you like, although many prefer the traditional mortar and pestle method as the pounding releases the natural oils and flavour of the nuts, and this contributes a lot to the finished taste.*

per portion Energy 339kcal/1399kJ; Protein 4.8g; Carbohydrate 5.1g, of which sugars 2.8g; Fat 33.4g, of which saturates 3.5g; Cholesterol 0mg; Calcium 34mg; Fibre 1.2g; Sodium 32mg.

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