

THE VERY BEST HUMMUS

(adapted from several sources)

1 cup dried chickpeas
1/4 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/4 cup tahini (best quality you can find)
juice of 1 lemon
1/4 cup cold water
red pepper flakes (optional)
cumin or paprika for decoration (optional)

The night before making the hummus, cover the chickpeas with enough water to cover by 2 inches and soak them for 12 hours. Drain and rinse the chickpeas and place them in a large saucepan with the baking soda. Cover them a couple of inches of water and bring the water to a boil. Simmer for an hour or until very tender. Drain the beans, let them cool slightly and add to a powerful mixer (Vitamix is available). If you don't have a Vitamix, use a food processor.

Add the lemon juice, tahini, salt, and blend until very smooth. With the motor running, drizzle in the water and continue to blend for a few more minutes. Taste and season with additional salt if needed. Add the red pepper flakes, if using, and mix gently. Transfer to a serving dish, top with a drizzle of olive oil, maybe some cumin or paprika sprinkled on top. If you like, a little bit of fresh lemon juice brightens up the flavors.