

oil-free baked falafel bites

FOR THE FALAFEL:

- 3 cloves garlic
- 1/2 cup (125 mL) red onion
- 1/3 cup (75 mL) packed fresh cilantro leaves
- 1/3 cup (75 mL) packed fresh parsley leaves
- 1 (15-ounce/425-g) can chickpeas, drained and rinsed
- 2 tablespoons (30 mL) ground flaxseed
- 1/4 cup (60 mL) plus 6 tablespoons spelt bread crumbs (90 mL) or Sprouted-Grain Bread Crumbs (see page 279)
- 1/2 teaspoon (2 mL) ground cumin
- 1/2 teaspoon (2 mL) fine-grain sea salt

FOR THE TOMATO-CUCUMBER SALSA:

- 1 1/2 cups (375 mL) grape tomatoes
- 1/4 cup (60 mL) red onions
- 1/4 cup (60 mL) fresh cilantro
- 1 tablespoon (15 mL) fresh lime juice
- 1/2 cup (125 mL) diced cucumber
- Fine-grain sea salt

TO ASSEMBLE:

- Leaves from 1 head of Bibb, Boston, or romaine lettuce
- Lemon-Tahini Dressing (see page 284)

This lightened-up take on traditional falafel will leave you feeling light and energized, and not at all weighed down. Rather than deep-frying the falafel, I've rolled them in crunchy whole grain spelt bread crumbs and then baked them in the oven. The bread crumbs give the falafel the nice crunch of a deep-fried version, but without all the oil and grease. Now that's something to smile about!

Makes 22 bite-size falafel

PREP TIME: 30 minutes • COOK TIME: 30 minutes

nut-free, soy-free, sugar-free

1. Make the Falafel: Preheat the oven to 400°F (200°C). Line a large rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. In a food processor, pulse the garlic to finely chop it. Add the onion, cilantro, and parsley and process until minced. Add the chickpeas and process until the mixture forms a coarse dough and holds together when pressed between your fingers.
3. Transfer the mixture to a large bowl and stir in the flaxseed, 1/4 cup (60 mL) of the bread crumbs, cumin, and salt until combined.
4. Shape the mixture into small patties, using about 1 tablespoon (15 mL) dough for each and pressing each firmly to hold its shape. Repeat until you have used all of the chickpea mixture.
5. With a pastry brush, brush a few drops of water onto each patty. One at a time, roll the patties in the remaining 6 tablespoons (90 mL) bread crumbs, pressing down on each side so the bread crumbs stick. (The crumbs don't tend to stick that well, so you have to make an effort to press them into the patty.)

Repeat until all of the patties have been coated. Place patties onto prepared baking sheet.

6. Bake the falafel until golden brown, about 30 minutes, flipping once halfway through the baking time.

7. Make the Tomato-Cucumber Salsa: In a food processor, combine the tomatoes, onion, cilantro, and lime juice and process until roughly chopped. Stir in the diced cucumber and salt to taste.

8. To assemble, arrange the lettuce leaves in a single layer on a serving tray. Place 1 falafel in the center of each lettuce leaf. Top with some of the Tomato-Cucumber Salsa and a drizzle of Lemon-Tahini Dressing.

lemon-tahini dressing

1 large clove garlic
1/4 cup (60 mL) tahini
1/4 cup (60 mL) fresh lemon juice
3 tablespoons (45 mL) nutritional yeast
1 to 2 tablespoons (15 to 30 mL) sesame oil or extra-virgin olive oil, to taste
1 to 2 tablespoons (15 to 30 mL) water
1/4 teaspoon (1 mL) fine-grain sea salt, or to taste

Quite possibly one of my all-time favorite salad dressings, this creamy, tangy dressing works well in a variety of dishes like my Oil-Free Baked Falafel Bites (see page 95).

Makes 2/3 cup (150 mL)

PREP TIME: 5 minutes

gluten-free, nut-free, raw/no-bake, soy-free, sugar-free, grain-free

1. In a food processor, pulse the garlic to mince it. Add the tahini, lemon juice, nutritional yeast, oil, water, and salt and process until smooth.

Tip: The dressing will thicken up a bit once chilled. Feel free to thin it out, if necessary, with a tablespoon or two (15 to 30 mL) of water or oil.

10-spice blend

2 tablespoons (30 mL) smoked paprika
1 tablespoon (15 mL) garlic powder
1 tablespoon (15 mL) dried oregano
1 tablespoon (15 mL) onion powder
1 tablespoon (15 mL) dried basil
2 teaspoons (10 mL) dried thyme
1 1/2 teaspoons (7 mL) freshly ground black pepper
1 1/2 teaspoons (7 mL) fine-grain sea salt
1 teaspoon (5 mL) white pepper
1 teaspoon (5 mL) cayenne pepper

This spice blend takes less than five minutes to throw together, and it can be used in a variety of dishes, from soups and stews to baked potatoes, kale chips, tofu, beans, avocado toast, and more. Try it in my 10-Spice Vegetable Soup with Cashew Cream for a flavorful soup that's sure to dazzle your taste buds (see page 137).

Makes 1/2 cup (125 mL)

PREP TIME: 5 minutes

gluten-free, raw/no-bake, sugar-free, oil-free, soy-free, grain-free

1. Combine all of the ingredients in a medium jar. Secure the lid and shake to combine. Shake the jar before each use.