

# Burnt Eggplant with Tahini

**Serve this extremely flavorful sauce with raw vegetables, flatbread or as an accompaniment to meat and fish. We love the idea of adding additional tomato and cucumber in larger cuts to produce a filling and healthy salad. This recipe is adapted from Yotam Ottolenghi's beautifully illustrated vegetarian cookbook Plenty, Chronical Books 2010.**

Serves 2-4

1 large eggplant

1/3 cup tahini paste

¼ cup water

2 tsp pomegranate molasses

1 tbsp lemon juice

1 garlic clove, crushed

3 tbsp chopped parsley

salt and black pepper

3 mini cucumbers (6 to 7 oz in total, optional)

¾ cup cherry tomatoes (optional)

seeds from ½ large pomegranate

a little olive oil to finish

1. First, burn the eggplant on the grill or under your broiler. The eggplants should be over (or under) direct heat. It is alright to allow the flame to touch the skin. Turn frequently for 15 to 20 minutes, until the flesh is soft and smoky and the skin is burnt all over. Don't allow them to catch fire! The eggplants are finished when the flesh is soft and yields no resistance. The eggplants should look entirely deflated and their skin should be burnt and broken. When cool enough to handle, scoop out the flesh into a colander, avoiding the blackened skin. Leave to drain for at least 30 minutes.
2. Chop the eggplant flesh roughly and transfer to a medium mixing bowl. Add the tahini, water, pomegranate molasses, lemon juice, garlic, parsley and some salt and pepper; mix well with a whisk. Taste and adjust the seasoning, adding more garlic, lemon juice, or molasses if needed. You want the salad to have a robust sour/slightly sweet flavor.

3. If you want to add cucumber and tomatoes, cut the cucumbers lengthways in half and then each half lengthways in two. Cut each quarter into 3/8-inch-long pieces. Halve the tomatoes. Stir them and the cucumber into the eggplant mix. To serve, spread over a shallow dish, scatter the pomegranate seeds on top and drizzle with olive oil.

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