

Everything tastes better with tahini, nobody in Israel would argue that. Israeli kids have their first tahini taste in their baby food (for its high amount of nutrients), they grow up and have pita with hummus, or sweet tahini spread (tahini blended with date syrup) as a snack in daycares. Back in the 70's, pita breads halves with hummus or tahini spread, with a slice of pickled cucumbers tucked in, were the ultimate food served in birthdays party and any other crowded celebration. I remember fondly our childhood summer days on the beach, grilling shish kebabs and dipping every meat bite in homemade rich tahini sauce. It was also our go to sauce when we went on picnics, to accompany turkey pastrami and chopped salad in a pita bread. And of course, there were our countless trips to the falafel stand down the street, where we used to go back and forth several time to drizzle more and more of this liquid gold sauce to enhance the other flavors inside our pita meal.

When shopping for tahini paste, buy one that is made in Israel or Lebanon, as tahini manufactures in these countries uses Humera seeds (grown in the town Humera, Ethiopia) that are suitable for grinding and produce tasty tahini. So delicious that you can pour it straight from the jar on roasted vegetables, salads, meat, and fish. Keep tahini paste always in your pantry (no need to refrigerate), there are so many ways you can use it. To make the classic tahini sauce you only need salt, lemon, garlic (if you like). Few additional ingredients and steps and you can make green tahini, baba ghanoush dip or sweet tahini spread. Variations are endless: add chopped nuts to a more textured tahini dip, pairs it with plain yogurt, that naturally has acidity taste (to enhance it even more squeeze in some lemon juice) or blend with pureed beet for a purple tahini. Serve any tahini sauce with pita bread or chips, fresh cut, or roasted veggies, next to cooked lentil, chopped salad, or use it as a spread for sandwich bread. Keep prepared tahini sauces in the fridge up to 3 days, sweet tahini can be stored in the pantry for weeks.

Classic Tahini Sauce

Makes 2 ¼ cups

Ingredients

- 1 cup (240 gr) tahini
- 3/4 cup cold water, or more, for desire consistency
- 2 garlic cloves, minced (add even more, if you wish)
- 1/4 cup fresh lemon juice, or more to taste
- 1/4 teaspoon kosher salt, or more to taste

Preparation

- Mix tahini paste, garlic, salt, lemon juice in a bowl.
- Add the water slowly and mix until it reaches the preferred consistency. Do not let the hard and sticky mixture (that you get right after adding the water) to intimidate you, just keep mixing it manually with a fork, until the water breaks the tahini paste's particles, and you get a smooth sauce.
- Taste and adjust flavor. Add more lemon juice, garlic, or salt, if desired.

Charred Eggplant with Tahini “Baba Ghanoush”

Serves 4-6

Ingredients

2 large eggplants

Classic Tahini sauce – make half of the amount of the **Classic Tahini Recipe** above.

Chopped parsley and pomegranate seeds for garnish (optional)

Preparation

- Preheat the oven on broiler.
- Line a baking sheet with aluminum foil.
- Make one dip cut lengthwise in each eggplant or score with a knife in a few places, and place on the lined baking sheet right under the broiler.
- Use metal tongs to turn around each eggplant every 10 minutes or so and let broil until entire eggplant skin is charred and turned flaky.
- Scoop the flesh with a spoon and transfer to a colander, drain for an hour, to get rid of as much water as possible.
- Place the eggplant pulp in a bowl and coarsely chop with a knife.
- Add the tahini sauce and mix.
- Garnish with chopped parsley and pomegranate seeds right before serving.

Beet Tahini

Makes 2 ¼ cups

Ingredients

4 medium size beets

Classic Tahini sauce – make half of the amount of the **Classic Tahini Recipe** above.

Toasted pita bread and cut fresh vegetable for serving

Preparation

- Cook washed beet in water until super tender. Let cool, peel and discard skins. You can also steam it for 1 min in Instant Pot or use the store-bought pre-cooked beets.
- Transfer beets to food processor or use hand blender to finely puree.
- Transfer to a bowl and mix manually with the tahini sauce, adjust flavors if desire, and serve.

Green Tahini

Makes 2 ¼ cups

Ingredients

1 bunch of parsley finely chopped (use knife or electric chopper).

Classic Tahini sauce – make half of the amount of the **Classic Tahini Recipe** above.

Preparation

- In a bowl mix the chopped parsley with the tahini sauce, adjust flavors if desire, and serve.

Bell Red Pepper Tahini

Makes 2 ¼ cups

Ingredients

3 large red bell peppers

1/2 teaspoon chili powder, or more to taste

2 teaspoons sweet paprika

1 teaspoon honey

Classic Tahini sauce – make the whole **Classic Tahini Recipe** above.

Preparation

- Preheat the oven on broiler.
- Line a baking sheet with aluminum foil and put the red pepper on top it right under the broiler.
- Use metal tongs to turn around the pepper every 10 minutes or so and let broil until entire peppers are charred and skin turned flaky.
- Transfer the hot pepper into a bowl and covered with lid or plastic wrap, or place inside a zip lock bag. Let cool (the steam will loosen the skin). Peel the peppers and remove the core and seeds.
- Place the pepper in a food processor or blender and puree.
- Transfer to a bowl and mix with all other ingredient until smooth.

Sweet Tahini Sauce

Makes 3/4 cup

Ingredients

1/2 cup (120 gr) tahini paste

¼ cup (4 Tablespoons) honey/date syrup/carob molasses, or more, to taste.

Preparation

- Mix the Tahini with the honey (or another sweetener). Taste to adjust sweetness.
- Spread on a toast, drizzle on pancake, or add a spoonful to your yogurt bowl.

