

PITA CHIPS

You can make these chips two ways, in a large ZipLok bag or a large bowl. I prefer to use a bowl.

These are a great, healthy alternative to chips that are fried and you can spice them up any way you like or just leave them plain to dip into hummus.

2 – 3 regular-sized bags of 8" diameter thin pita bread will make enough chips to about fill a 1-gallon ZipLok bag.

I advise you to make plenty as these go very quickly.

INGREDIENTS:

1 bag of pita (pocket) bread - NOT flat bread. The thinner the bread, the better.

1/3 - 1/2 cup (scant) Olive oil

Optional: 1-3 Tablespoons seasonings or to taste.

I use 3 - 5 heaping tablespoons when making the Zaatar (pronounced zah-tah) chips and add about 1 teaspoon of citric acid for sourness

DIRECTIONS:

1. Preheat oven to 250 - 275 degrees, no hotter!
2. Cut pita bread rounds into desired size triangular pieces. If the pita bread is relatively thick, some people cut the rounds in half, then separate the halves (layers), then cut it into triangular pieces. The latter is what I usually do even if the bread is thin.
3. In a measuring cup, measure out your oil, mix in spices, stir well, test for taste, adjust as necessary.
- 3a. Fill a large ziplock bag (1 gallon bags are best) about half full with chips.

Pour 1/2 the olive oil-spice mix into the bag over the chips, zip closed, and toss chips to coat well. If necessary, add more spices and toss again. Empty coated chips onto prepared cookie sheet (see step 5.) Repeat with remaining chips and oil.

OR

Preferred Method:

3b. Put all the pita bread triangles in a large bowl.

In a measuring cup, measure out your oil, mix in spices, stir well, test for taste, adjust as necessary.

Pour the olive oil-spice mix over the bread and stir for several minutes with a spatula to coat chips.

Note: If making zaatar chips (see **TIPS** section below) you will only need a very small amount of sumac - if you want to use it at all - about a 10:1 ratio of zaatar seasoning to sumac. Zaatar comes in several varieties – Lebanese, Jordian, Syrian, Palestinian, some with sumac already included – be sure to read the ingredients label. I use Adonis Spices Traditional Lebanese Zaatar mix. You may also want to include a pinch or two of citric acid powder for additional sourness and you might want to use more than 1 or 2 tablespoons of the zaatar seasoning - I use 3 - 5 heaping tablespoons and also salt and pepper to taste. Once you've mixed all the seasonings into the oil, taste it and adjust seasonings accordingly. You can always sprinkle on more seasonings on the chips and continue to toss - the spices don't necessarily have to be mixed in with the olive oil.

5. Line a baking/cookie sheet with parchment paper and spread chips out on the sheet.

Note: You don't need the parchment paper, but it makes for a much easier transferring of chips to container and clean-up. Even better - use a Silpat (or equivalent) silicone sheet - available at Bed, Bath & Beyond.

6. Bake for about 15 minutes, remove sheet from oven, stir chips around/turn over with spatula and continue to bake checking at 2 - 3 minute increments until desired crispness is reached. Depending on your oven, thickness of chips (the thinner, the less time), amount of oil used, and how many chips you have on your baking sheet probably 20-30 minutes. After you remove chips from oven, let them cool on the baking sheet and they will crisp up a little more from the residual heat.

Resist the urge to over-bake them. They should not be dark brown, only partially brown with some light patches.

7. Allow to cool completely and store in an airtight container or ZipLok bag.

TIPS:

About the maximum amount of chips you can get on a ½-sheet cookie pan is 1 bag of cut up pita bread.

You can get 1/2-sheet pans (cookie sheets) at Sam's or Costco – they a little larger (13" x 18") than your standard cookie sheet. Be sure to measure your oven to see if it can accommodate a 1/2-sheet pan before you run out and buy one.

I've been refining this recipe for quite a while. One thing I learned is that you want a lighter rather than a heavier coating of oil. You will probably have to toss the chips for several minutes to achieve a thin, even coating. Too much oil and you practically have to burn the chips to get them to crisp up.

However, you will probably still have some chips that aren't as crisp as the others. Don't worry, they will last at least 2 weeks without going stale, but they probably won't be around that long, anyway. Ha!

It may take you a couple of attempts to get the consistency and seasonings the way you want them.

Most of the time I use pita bread (thin variety) from the Sweis Pita Bakery at 2115 N. May Ave - on the west side of the road just south of the NW 23rd St intersection - they have best pita bread and it comes in 3 thicknesses – thick, regular and thin as well as other items you may need that I mention below and a variety of other Mediterranean specialty foods. They bake their pita bread fresh on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Also in Oklahoma City, get supplies at Mediterranean Imports & Deli on the east side of N. May Ave. at NW 56th St. Some Crest stores carry pita bread from John's Pita Bakery in Wichita, KS – their bread is very thin and also works well.

I always suggest the thin variety as it crisps up quickly and without burning the chips.

For variety, look for pita bread in different flavors like onion or garlic or you can add ground, flaked onion or ground, flaked garlic or onion salt or garlic salt. If using the salted varieties, be careful not to make them too salty. **Hint:** The lemon pepper mix you find in most stores has way too much salt to use. If you want lemon pepper chips, you'll have to buy the salt-free variety. When reading a spice label, if the first ingredient is salt, be careful, it may be too salty.

Zaatar (pronounced zah-tah by the Lebanese) seasoning is finely chopped thyme with sesame seeds and sumac - it is widely used in Lebanese dishes. You can sometimes find the ground variety, but I always use the finely chopped.

You can get the zaatar seasoning, sumac and citric acid at just about any of the Mediterranean or Indian ethnic stores around town. Go easy on the citric acid as it is very sour – a little goes a long way.

If you plan on making a lot of chips, do this:

Go to Sam's and buy your favorite seasonings in bulk. For example, I buy Tone's Canadian Steak Seasoning (28 oz.) and Durkee's Six Pepper Blend (22 oz.) for usually less than \$5 - \$7 per container. Then, I come home and put it in my coffee bean grinder and grind the coarse spices to a finer size. Any cheap coffee grinder will do - I have a DeLonghi that holds about a 1/2 cup at a time which is usually more than enough. Of course, depending on the variety of spice you use, you may or may not want or need to grind it. I also use the flaked, dried garlic from Tone's, but I grind it up (medium) for the chips in a manual pepper mill, as you can also do with any of the other spices - you don't necessarily need a coffee bean grinder. For garlic chips, do **NOT** use garlic powder as it is too fine and will burn and become bitter during the baking process. I use a little bit of Lawry's Garlic Salt with parsley and a lot of manually-ground (medium), **flaked** garlic.

If you plan on making a lot of hummus and or pita chips, it is probably a good idea to go to Sam's or Costco to get your olive oil as they have the best price, as usual. I use Sam's brand, Member's Mark. You can always use vegetable oil in a pinch, but it obviously won't give you the authentic flavor of olive oil.

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