



Smoky Eggplant Dip

Serves 6

I make this dip all summer long, when eggplants are plentiful and inexpensive. I have a gas grill outside my kitchen door, and I use it often for things like this. If I had to start a fire to cook three eggplants, I'm pretty sure I wouldn't do it as often (but if you've already started a fire for something else, it's a great time to cook them). That said, you don't need a grill at all. Second best is cooking right on the gas burner of your stove. If you don't have *that*, you can use your broiler. The idea is to blacken the heck out of them however you cook them so that when you peel off all that black skin, a smoky flavor remains.

- 3 small Italian eggplants, about 1 pound each
- 1 to 2 garlic cloves, grated
- 1/2 cup plain Greek yogurt (any fat content) or labneh
- 2 tablespoons tahini
- 2 to 3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice, or to taste
- 1/4 cup fresh Italian parsley leaves
- 3/4 teaspoon salt, or to taste
- Pinch of cayenne pepper
- To garnish (use any or all):
 - Olive oil
 - Sumac
 - Fresh Italian parsley leaves
 - Mixed fresh herbs
 - Chopped oil-cured olives
 - Halved or quartered cherry tomatoes

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1. Heat a grill to high.
 2. Prick the eggplants all over with a fork so some steam can escape while they're cooking. Roast the eggplants, whole, on the grill, giving them a quarter turn every 4 to 5 minutes.

Grill until the skin is charred and the flesh is soft and creamy, 20 to 25 minutes. Remove from the heat and let sit in a bowl until cool enough to handle but as hot as you can stand it. Pour off the excess liquid. Peel the skin off the eggplants, transferring the flesh to a sieve over a bowl as you work. Mix the garlic into the hot eggplant. (Combining the garlic with the eggplant while it is hot will help to soften its blow.)

3. Transfer half of the eggplant to a food processor and add the yogurt, tahini, lemon juice, parsley, salt, and cayenne to taste. Pulse until well combined. Add the remaining eggplant and pulse just a few times, until coarsely chopped, so there is some texture. Adjust the seasonings. Transfer to a shallow bowl and add your choice of garnishes.