

Hummus

MAKES ABOUT 2 CUPS.
SERVING 8 TO 10

TIME: 40 MINUTES (INCLUDES 30 MINUTES IN THE REFRIGERATOR)

Serve hummus with pita chips (page 15) or fresh pita breads cut into wedges. If you like, serve with crudités (pages 5, 6, and 7) as well.

- 1 (15-ounce) can chickpeas, drained, rinsed, and towed dry
- 1 medium clove garlic, minced
- $\frac{3}{4}$ teaspoon salt
- Pinch cayenne pepper
- 3 tablespoons juice from 1 large lemon
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup tahini
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup water

Process all the ingredients in a food processor until smooth, about 40 seconds. Transfer the hummus to a serving bowl, cover with plastic wrap, and chill until the flavors meld, at least 30 minutes; serve cold. (The hummus can be refrigerated for up to 2 days.)

ROASTED RED PEPPER SPREAD

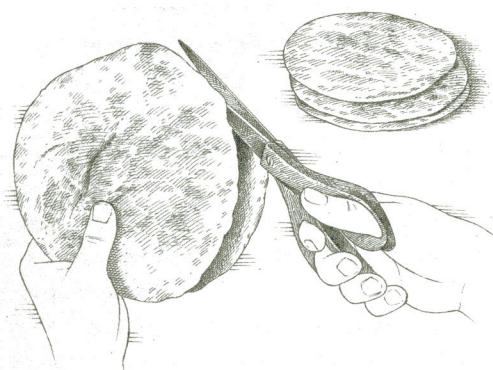
MUHAMMARA, MADE FROM ROASTED red peppers, walnuts, and pomegranate molasses, is a popular spread made throughout the eastern Mediterranean. We wanted to develop a quick version, based on pantry staples, without losing the sweet, smoky, savory flavors that make this spread so popular.

The first hurdle was the roasted peppers. Although roasting red peppers is fairly easy, we found that good-quality jarred peppers could be used (see page 11 for more information). The trick is to rinse them of their brine before

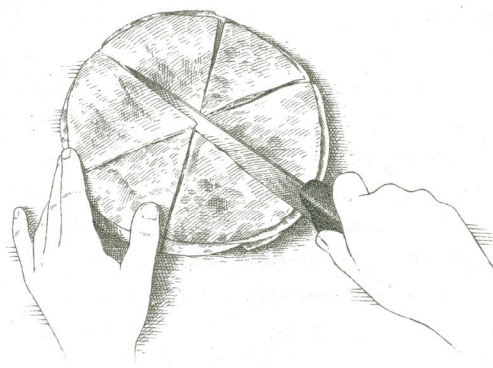
using them. The next hurdle was finding a replacement for the pomegranate molasses, which is difficult to locate in typical American supermarkets. Seeking its thick, syrupy texture and sweet-sour flavor, we tested a variety of pantry ingredients to come up with a substitute. In the end, we found that a combination of lemon juice, honey, and mild molasses worked well. Seasoned with cayenne, ground cumin, and salt, the spread required only a small amount of olive oil to help loosen its consistency and toasted walnuts to enrich it.

At this point, our dip tasted pretty good,

CUTTING PITA BREADS



1. Using kitchen shears, cut around the perimeter of each pita bread to yield 2 thin rounds.



2. Stack the pita rounds and, using a chef's knife, cut them into 6 wedges each.