



FAVA THE DIP

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While Fava is also a delicious soup in the Greek Heritage Kitchen, it is known primarily as a dip during the summer months. Creamy and delicious, it's also quite easy to prepare and serve, even at the last minute. It's a versatile alternative to hummus, and offers great flexibility during the cold weather months when it can be used as a hearty base for many toppings. Roasted eggplant slices can be filled with Fava dip, toasted pine nuts, herbs and finely chopped onion. Roll the eggplant around the filling, and use three to four rolls per person served over your favorite green salad. Drizzle with pomegranate molasses and olive oil. When I can find good all-season grape or cherry tomatoes, I mix them into a typical Greek salad and serve this over the Fava along with Feta cheese and a few Greek Kefthetes. You can also put a generous spoonful into pita bread, add a few salad greens and top with chickpea patties for a beautiful vegetarian Falafel sandwich.

INGREDIENTS

1 cup yellow split peas (1/2 lb)
1 clove of garlic, chopped or pressed
1 small onion, peeled and root cut off but kept whole
1 ½ teaspoons salt
½ teaspoon pepper
4 cups water plus half to one cup more as the split peas are nearing the end of cooking time

TO PUREE AND FINISH

Juice of half a lemon
2 tablespoons or more of extra-virgin olive oil plus more to drizzle on top
½ cup thinly sliced or chopped red onion

METHOD

1. Wash and drain the split peas. Combine the peas, water, onion, garlic, salt and pepper in a large pot over high heat.
2. When the water begins to boil, lower the heat to medium or medium-high and cover the pot. Set the timer for 30 minutes, but watch periodically to see if you need to add water.
3. At 30 minutes, remove the onion. Stir and continue to cook for 15 minutes further. This is when you will definitely need to add water. To cook fully, the split peas will take anywhere from 45 minutes to one hour. This will depend greatly on the freshness of the peas.
4. Remove the pot from the stove. Using an immersion blender, slowly puree the split peas. Add ¼ to ½ cup hot tap water to thin out a bit. Now you can use a whisk to incorporate the lemon juice and olive oil. Taste and adjust seasonings, if needed.
5. Scrape into a large serving bowl or platter with drizzled olive oil and the onions on top.
6. Serve immediately, or cover and serve within a couple of hours, accompanied by toasted slices of French bread or Pita, Kalamata olives and Feta cheese.
7. The dip may be refrigerated and served two to three days later. Remove the Fava from the refrigerator at least half an hour before serving and whisk again, using a tablespoon or two of hot water to thin out.

NOTES: You may need more water to thin out the Fava when whisking and when using after the mix has been in refrigeration. Use your judgment.