

Smoky Roasted Eggplant-Garlic Dip

A dash of smoked paprika gives this versatile dip a haunting, irresistible flavor. Pair it with crackers or pita chips, or use it as a sandwich filling. Warning #1: This dip is best eaten as soon as it's made. (It will get watery as it stands, so don't make it in advance.) Warning #2: It doesn't make a lot (1 cup), so if you're inclined to eat dip with your index finger before serving it to others, you'll have nothing left. Consider doubling the recipe.

Yields 1 cup

One 14-ounce eggplant
1 head garlic, unpeeled
1/2 teaspoon olive oil
3 tablespoons whole milk Greek-style plain yogurt (do not use nonfat)(I used Trader Joe's, not Fage)
1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
1/8 teaspoon smoked paprika, plus more for sprinkling on top
freshly ground black pepper

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees and line a rimmed baking sheet with aluminum foil.

Prick the eggplant all over with a fork and place on the lined baking sheet.

Slice off the top of the garlic (the first fifth, say) to expose the cloves. Place on large square of foil and bring up the sides, leaving the top open. Drizzle the garlic with the olive oil and sprinkle with a pinch of salt. Pinch the foil closed and place on the baking sheet with the eggplant.

Roast the eggplant and garlic packet together for 1 hour, turning the eggplant after 30 minutes. After an hour, remove the garlic packet (open carefully to allow the steam to escape, and set aside to cool). Keep the eggplant in the oven and give it another turn. Continue roasting about 15 minutes longer (for 75 minutes total) until it is nearly blackened and very, very soft. Allow to cool slightly.

Slice the eggplant in half and scoop the insides into a strainer. Let drain over the sink for about 15 minutes, then press down with the back of a spoon to extract any remaining liquid. (It doesn't have to be completely dry.) Scrape into a food processor.

Squeeze the roasted garlic out of its skins (it will ooze) directly into the food processor with the eggplant. (Discard the garlic peels.) Add the yogurt, salt, smoked paprika, and pepper. Process about 10 seconds or until smooth.

Serve immediately.