

BABA GHANNOUGE (METABBAL)

Eggplant Dip



In Lebanon, this is called *Baba Ghannouge*. In Jordan and Syria, it is called *Metabbal*. There is nothing like the taste of Baba Ghannouge made with eggplant roasted on hot coals.

INGREDIENTS

1 large or 2 medium eggplants
1-2 cloves garlic, mashed
½ teaspoon salt
2 tablespoons lemon Juice
2 tablespoons tahini paste
Chopped parsley for decoration
Olive oil

INSTRUCTIONS

Remove eggplant stems. Wrap eggplant tightly in a double layer of aluminum foil. Roast on top of a gas burner: place a wire trivet over burner then place wrapped eggplant on trivet. Roast over medium high heat about 7 minutes per side. Use oven mitts or pot holders to handle. Roast until eggplant feels very soft. Remove from flame and set aside to cool. (Alternatively, eggplant can be roasted without the foil in the oven for approximately 40 minutes at 400 degrees, or on the grill until the skin is charred and eggplant is soft.)

When eggplant is cooled, cut the eggplant and scoop out the pulp or flesh. Place in a colander to drain out excess liquid for 10 minutes. Place in a bowl, mash with a fork or a pestle until smooth, or in a food processor.

Stir together salt, garlic, tahini and lemon juice. Pour over eggplant and mix well. Adjust the lemon juice and salt to taste.

Serve in a shallow bowl-type dish. Decorate with chopped parsley and pour desired amount of olive oil on top. Serve with pita bread.

* When in season, fresh pomegranate seeds make a beautiful and tasty decoration, which is the Syrian way of serving this dish.