



ANSON MILLS

Falafel

Yield

18 to 20 falafel

Time

8 hours or up to overnight to soak the chickpeas, then about 1 hour active time

Cooking Remarks

The only way to get perfectly textured falafel is by wet-milling the mix through a meat grinder. We tried to replicate the fine, pebbly texture with a food processor, but whirred with a blade, the mixture runs from too coarse to too smooth too easily. If you own a stand mixer, though, most manufacturers make meat grinder attachments that can be purchased fairly inexpensively. The plastic ones are the cheapest and work fine for occasional use.

This recipe yields about 20 small falafel, which could certainly feed four people for lunch or dinner, especially if accompanied by our grilled flatbreads and sauces. It is also simple enough to double the recipe. The shaped but uncooked falafel freeze well, too, for longer storage: After shaping the balls, freeze them uncovered until firm and frozen. The falafel can then be transferred to a freezer-quality zipper-lock bag and frozen for up to 1 month. To prepare from frozen, remove the number of falafel you wish to serve and align in a single layer on a towel. They will thaw completely in about 30 minutes and can be fried as directed.

Equipment Mise en Place

For this recipe, you will need a digital kitchen scale; a container for soaking the chickpeas; a colander; two medium bowls; a manual meat grinder or a stand mixer with a meat grinder attachment, along with the medium and a small die; two small baking sheets or large plates (or one of each); parchment paper; a 3-quart saucepan (ideally one that's wide and shallow); an instant-read or deep-fry thermometer; and a large slotted spoon or small spider.

Ingredients

8 ounces dried chickpeas, picked over and rinsed
Spring or filtered water
0.6 ounce fresh flat-leaf parsley leaves (1 cup packed)
0.6 ounce fresh cilantro leaves (1 cup packed)
3 ounces finely diced sweet onion
1 tablespoon minced garlic (germ removed if present)
2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
1 teaspoon grated zest, plus 1 teaspoon juice from 1 lemon
½ teaspoon baking powder
½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
Fine sea salt
2 quarts peanut oil

Grilled Semolina Flatbreads, warmed, for serving

Simple Tahini Sauce, Harissa, and/or Schug, for serving

Cucumber slices, black olives, and/or finely shredded cabbage dressed with extra-virgin oil and lemon juice, for serving

Directions

- 1.** Place the chickpeas in a container and cover them with about 3 inches of spring or filtered water. Let soak at room temperature for at least 8 hours or up to overnight.
- 2.** Drain the chickpeas in a colander and rinse them thoroughly. Turn them into a medium bowl and add the parsley, cilantro, onion, garlic, olive oil, and lemon zest and juice. Stir to combine.
- 3.** Set up a meat grinder with the medium die and have ready a medium bowl. Grind the chickpea mixture (on medium-low speed if using a stand mixer with a grinder attachment); catch the mix in the bowl. Once all the chickpea mixture has been ground, sprinkle on the baking powder, pepper, and 1 teaspoon salt. Mix thoroughly by hand; reserve the now-empty bowl.
- 4.** Remove the medium die on the meat grinder and replace it with the smallest one. Grind the chickpea mixture once more, catching it in the reserved bowl. Disassemble the grinder, scrape out any mix that didn't get forced through, and add it to your finished falafel mix; it will be slightly coarser but this doesn't matter. Press plastic wrap directly onto the surface of the mixture and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes or up to 2 hours.
- 5.** Line a small baking sheet or large plate with parchment paper. Divide the chilled chickpea mixture into 0.75-ounce portions. Alternatively, use a 1-tablespoon measure to scoop packed spoonfuls. Either way, you should have 18 to 20 portions. Using your hands, press each portion to compact it and form it into a sphere; the mixture is a little crumbly, but even if the falafel aren't perfectly shaped, they will still taste great. As they are formed, place the falafel on the prepared baking sheet or plate. Drape with plastic wrap and refrigerate while you heat the oil for frying.
- 6.** Line a second small baking sheet or large plate with paper towels and place it near your frying station. In a 3-quart saucepan (ideally one that is wide and shallow), warm the peanut oil (it should reach a depth of 2 to 3 inches) over medium heat until it registers 350 degrees on an instant-read or deep-fry thermometer. Remove the falafel from the refrigerator and, one at a time, carefully drop half of them into the oil. Fry the falafel, stirring occasionally with a slotted spoon or small spider and adjusting the heat as necessary to maintain an oil temperature of 300 to 325 degrees, until deeply browned, 4 to 5 minutes. Using the slotted spoon, transfer the falafel as they are done to the prepared baking sheet. Let the drain for a few seconds, then sprinkle lightly with salt. Let the oil return to 350 degrees and fry the remaining falafel in the same way. Serve immediately with flatbreads, accompanying sauce(s), and your garnishes of choice.