DIRECT · EASY

Charcoal-Roasted Baba Ganoush on the Kamado, with Tahini and Pita

Whole aubergines on the coals until the skin chars: the flesh turns creamy and smoky, and with tahini, lemon, garlic and cumin it becomes the baba ganoush you scoop up with pita.



PREP	COOK	SERVINGS	TEMPERATURE
25 min	45 min	6	260 °C

Ingredients

- **4 ud** medium aubergines (about 1.2 kg), skin on
- **1 ud** lemon, juiced (about 40-50 ml), plus optional zest
- **1 cdta** ground cumin
- **3 cda** extra virgin olive oil, plus a splash to serve
- **al gusto** sweet paprika or sumac, to sprinkle
- **4 cda** tahini (sesame paste)
- **1 diente** garlic clove, crushed with the salt
- **1 cdta** fine salt, to taste
- **1 manojo** fresh parsley, chopped
- **6 ud** pita breads, to serve

Method

1 PREPARE THE AUBERGINES

Wash and dry the aubergines and prick each one with a fork in three or four places; without those holes the steam inside can burst the skin as it heats. Do not peel or salt them: the whole skin is the vessel that is going to burn. Leave them at room temperature while you light the fire.

2 LIGHT AND CLEAR THE ASH

Before loading, clear the old ash through the bottom door with the onlyfire ash tool, so air flows freely. Fill the firebox with lump charcoal and light it. With no deflector and the grate at its normal height, bring the kamado to 250-280 °C with the bottom vent open about three fingers and the top vent at three-quarters. Wait 15 minutes with the temperature steady.

3 PLACE THE AUBERGINES

With the Rösle leather gloves on, open by burping the lid: lift it about 5 cm, wait about 5 seconds, then open fully with your face turned away, because of the flare-up risk. Place the aubergines directly on the steadiest pieces of charcoal, or on the grate as close to the coals as possible, spaced apart. Close the lid.

4 TURN UNTIL CHARRED

Every 6-8 minutes, open with burping and gloves and turn the aubergines a quarter turn with long tongs. Look for black, dry, wrinkled skin all round and flesh that gives when pressed: 25-35 minutes in total. If the skin catches in flame, close the bottom vent a little; it does not matter if it burns, but it must not be raw inside.

5 REMOVE AND REST

Lift the aubergines out with the tongs, wearing gloves, into a bowl or dish. Cover with cling film or a plate and rest 10 minutes: the steam softens the flesh and loosens the skin. Meanwhile close both kamado vents to put out the coals or, if you are going to warm the pitas, leave the fire as it is.

6 PEEL AND DRAIN

Split each aubergine and scoop the flesh out with a spoon, avoiding pieces of burnt skin, although a few black specks are normal and add flavour. Put it in a sieve for 10 minutes and press gently so it releases the bitter liquid.

7 MIX THE DIP

Chop the flesh with a large knife. In a bowl, beat the tahini with the lemon juice and the garlic crushed with salt until it turns pale. Add the aubergine, cumin and oil and mix with a fork. Taste and adjust salt and lemon.

8 SERVE WITH PITA

Spread the dip in a shallow bowl, make a well with the spoon and pour in oil. Sprinkle with paprika or sumac and parsley. Serve with warm pitas, heated a minute on the grate if the fire is still lit.

Editor's tips

- The blacker the skin, the more smoke in the flesh, but separate the burnt part: a piece of charred skin that ends up in the dip adds bitterness. When in doubt, remove more.
- Do not whizz the dip to a purée: a knife and a fork leave strands and the result is closer to the original. If you want it smoother, pulse just two or three times.
- It is a good moment to use the fire: after the aubergines you can roast peppers or warm the pitas. The escalivada uses the same burnt-skin logic.
- With aubergines straight on the coals, do not leave them alone long: charcoal shifts and an aubergine can drop between lumps. Better to turn them often.

Gear for this recipe

Kamado Joe Classic III 18"

This recipe asks little of the kamado, just a chamber that reaches 250-280 °C on lump charcoal and sits the aubergine a few centimetres from the coals. The Kamado Joe Classic III is a mid-size ceramic kamado with plenty of room for three or four good-sized aubergines on the grate. At 46 cm across, there is no need to work in batches. Honest drawback: with no deflector and the lid opened every 6-8 minutes, you have to watch the draught, because the coals flare each time air gets in.

mikamado.es/en/kamados/kamado-joe-classic-iii

Jealous Devil 100% White Quebracho lump charcoal 15.8 kg

The aubergine sits on or beside the charcoal, so the fuel is part of the flavour. Jealous Devil is quebracho blanco lump charcoal, a very dense wood, and the manufacturer describes it as low in ash with a long burn. Large lumps settle well and leave a steady bed to rest the aubergines on; the fine ash of a poor charcoal would end up stuck to the skin. Drawback: its listing quotes up to 1170 °F (about 630 °C), so with the bottom vent wide open it easily overshoots 280 °C; start closing the vents before you reach temperature.

mikamado.es/en/accesorios/jealous-devil-quebracho-lump-charcoal

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Rösle leather barbecue gloves: long, one size

Turning aubergines over the coals means opening the kamado at 250-280 °C every 6-8 minutes and working with your hands near the rim. The Rösle gloves are leather, 41.5 cm long and universal size 24/XL according to their listing, so they also cover the wrist and part of the forearm against sparks and flare-ups. Drawback: the listing says they are not washable, and the leather gets marked with ash and grease, but for this job that is just what is needed.

mikamado.es/en/accesorios/rosle-guantes-cuero-barbacoa

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onlyfire F-FPA5069: 43 cm ash rake for kamado

Cooking directly over the coals demands free air at the bottom: old ash blocks the bottom vent and the temperature will not climb. The onlyfire ash tool is 43.2 cm long, has an insulated wooden handle and is for raking ash out through the kamado's bottom door. In this recipe it is used before loading the charcoal and, once cold, to empty what has built up. Drawback: it is a long, simple piece, not a shovel, so clearing a lot of ash takes several passes.

mikamado.es/en/accesorios/onlyfire-herramienta-ceniza-kamado

Full recipe at: mikamado.es/en/recetas/baba-ganoush-berenjena-brasa-kamado

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