

RECIPE FOR YOUR HEALTH

TZATZIKI



Tzatziki is a traditional Mediterranean dish that originates from Turkey and Greece. It's made from strained yogurt, also known as Greek yogurt and mixed with cucumbers, garlic, salt, olive oil and sometimes lemon juice. Herbs like dill, mint or parsley are added. It's served as a cold dip (sauce) with salads, meats, olives, bread and crackers. In Middle Eastern cuisine "mezze" platters are served with tzatziki alongside other salads and dips like hummus and baba ghanoush (cooked, mashed eggplant mixed with tahini and seasoning).

Greek yogurt is high in protein and calcium and low in calories. Cucumber adds fiber and a variety of vitamins and minerals. For an even more nutritious and delicious Mediterranean food experience, mix tzatziki with avocado. Then spread on spelt bread and top with chopped tomatoes and Kalamata olives.

This recipe takes ten minutes to make and has endless possibilities! Serve it with fish or poultry for a refreshing dipping sauce. Tzatziki mellows out spicy cuisines such as Indian. If you like sweet with savory, a fruit chutney pairs well. Otherwise, simply serve with toasted bread, crackers and fresh vegetable crudité.

RULES FOR MAKING TZATZIKI:

1. Use nonfat or low-fat Greek yogurt. Greek yogurt is already strained, which results in a creamy consistency for the spread.
2. Remove the seeds from the cucumber or use English cucumbers, sometimes labeled as seedless.
3. Fresh garlic, lemon and dill add superb flavor. However if you dislike any of these ingredients, just leave it out.
4. You can drizzle a small amount of fresh, cold-pressed extra-virgin olive oil on top before serving. Be mindful of the amount, because 1-tablespoon of oil adds 120 calories and 14 grams of fat.

Layne's Tzatziki Recipe (makes 3 cups)

INGREDIENTS (choose organic when available):

- 2 cups plain nonfat Greek yogurt
- 1 cup seedless cucumber, diced
- 1 ½ tablespoons fresh lemon juice (juice from ½ fresh lemon)
- 2 garlic cloves, pressed
- 1 tablespoon fresh dill, finely chopped
- 1 tablespoon fresh chives, finely chopped
- Sea salt to taste, optional

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. In a medium bowl, combine all ingredients.
2. For flavors to meld, chill in the fridge overnight.
3. Stir before serving.

This will stay fresh in the fridge for 3 to 4 days.

NUTRITION FACTS PER SERVING, based on 6-servings: 44 calories, 0 grams fat, 7.7 grams protein, 3.7 grams carbohydrate, 79 milligrams calcium.



Recipe and photo by Layne Lieberman, MS, RD, CDN, culinary nutritionist and award-winning author of "Beyond the Mediterranean Diet: European Secrets of the Super-Healthy." For more information and recipes, visit www.WorldRD.com