

Crispy Chickpea Bulgur Bowl with Romesco Sauce

Romesco sauce is a traditional Spanish sauce that features roasted red peppers and tomato paste. My version is weeknight-friendly and doesn't require a blender or food processor. Mediterranean staples like eggplant, chickpeas, and bulgur round out this plant-based grain bowl.

MAKES 4 SERVINGS (1 BOWL EACH)
PREPARATION TIME: 50 MINUTES

Ingredients

Bulgur Bowl:

- 1 (15-ounce) can chickpeas, drained, reserve liquid
- 1 large eggplant, chopped into bite-size pieces
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup whole grain cornmeal
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 teaspoon cumin
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon paprika
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt
- 1 cup bulgur, uncooked
- 3 cups water

Romesco Sauce:

- 3 roasted red peppers, finely chopped (about $\frac{1}{2}$ cup)
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 teaspoons paprika
- 1 (6-ounce) can tomato paste
- 2 tablespoons almond meal
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup water

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About the Recipe Author

Recipe by Kelly LeBlanc, MLA, RD, LDN, the director of nutrition at Oldways, a nonprofit organization helping people rediscover the healthy, sustainable joys of the "old ways" of shared cultural traditions.



Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 425°F.
2. Place eggplant in a bowl with chickpea liquid, stirring to coat eggplant. Mix in cornmeal until coated.
3. Transfer the breaded eggplant to a large baking sheet sprayed with cooking spray.
4. Mix chickpeas, olive oil, cumin, and paprika in a mixing bowl. Transfer the chickpeas to the baking sheet with the eggplant. Sprinkle with $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt.
5. Bake for 15 minutes. Use a spatula to turn the chickpeas and eggplant so that they brown evenly, then bake for another 15 minutes.
6. Combine the bulgur and water in a medium pot. Bring to a boil, and then reduce heat to low and cook, covered, for 10 minutes, until the liquid is absorbed and the grains are tender. Remove from heat but keep the lid on.
7. To make the Romesco sauce, add roasted pepper, olive oil, paprika, tomato paste, almond meal, and water to a small pot, and cook on low heat, whisking until well combined. Cook for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally, until warm.
8. To serve, divide the bulgur, eggplant, chickpeas and Romesco sauce into four bowls as follows: 1 cup bulgur, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup eggplant, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup chickpeas, and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup Romesco sauce. Serve warm.

Note: You can roast bell peppers, or buy them prepared in a jar.

Nutritional Analysis (1 bowl serving): 440 calories, 67 g carbohydrate, 12 g fiber, 9 g total sugar, 0 g added sugar, 14 g fat, 2 g saturated fat, 0 mg cholesterol, 14 g protein, 570 mg sodium

