



Make the most of grill season by grilling most of the meal - Char-Grilled Garlicky Eggplant Dip-

By: Melissa d'Arabian June 10, 2015

Summertime grilling is in full swing. And my feeling is that if you are going to crank up the grill anyway, you might as well leverage it and make as much of the meal on there as possible.

Don't stop at grilling meat. How about grilling up a bunch of veggies for a warmed chopped salad? Just rub some oil on the vegetables before grilling, remove them just before they are tender, chop them and toss with a little lemon juice, fresh herbs and salt and pepper.



You also can make great appetizers on the grill. I'm partial to the smoky flavor of this charred eggplant and garlic dip. You stick the eggplant on the grill whole and let the skin char up completely. Then you remove the skin and use the tender flesh that has been infused with the flavor of the grill.

Combine that with sweet roasted garlic (which you also do on the grill), and you have a new backyard barbecue favorite. And with eggplant being so low in calories (about 30 calories a cup), you'll want this dip in your summer repertoire regularly. Serve it with cut up veggies for an updated crudite everyone will love.

CHAR-GRILLED GARLICKY EGGPLANT DIP

Start to finish: 45 minutes

Serves: 6

- 1 head garlic
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- Kosher salt
- 2 large eggplants (about 2 pounds)
- ½ cup tahini
- Juice and zest of 1 lemon
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley
- Ground black pepper
- Celery sticks, bell pepper strips, carrot sticks, cucumber rounds, or crackers, to serve

Heat half of the grill to medium-high and other half to low.

Set the head of garlic on its side and carefully slice off the top ½ inch to expose the tops of the cloves. Set the head on a sheet of foil, then drizzle it with the oil. Sprinkle generously with salt, then loosely wrap the foil around the head of garlic.

Pierce the eggplants all over with a fork, then place them on the hottest side of the grill. Place the foil-wrapped garlic on the cooler side of the grill. Cover the grill and cook the eggplant for 20 minutes, rotating every 4 to 5 minutes until all sides are completely charred. Remove the eggplant from the grill, but continue to cook the garlic until the cloves are soft, about another 15 minutes for a total of 30 to 35 minutes.

Once the eggplant has cooled enough to handle, cut each in half and scoop out the flesh. Place flesh in a colander to drain over the sink for 15 minutes.

Meanwhile, remove the garlic from the grill and, when it is cool enough to handle, squeeze the softened cloves out of the skin and into a food processor. Add the drained eggplant flesh and pulse until chunky smooth. Add the tahini, lemon zest and juice, cilantro and parsley. Pulse 4 to 5 times just to mix well, then season with salt and pepper

Serve with celery sticks, bell pepper strips, carrot sticks, cucumber rounds or crackers.

Nutrition information per serving: 190 calories; 120 calories from fat (63 percent of total calories); 13 g fat (12 g saturated; 0 g trans fats); 0 mg cholesterol; 170 mg sodium; 16 g carbohydrate; 5 g fiber; 5 g sugar; 5 g protein.

Food Network star Melissa d'Arabian is an expert on healthy eating on a budget. She is the author of the "Supermarket Healthy" cookbook. <http://www.melissadarabian.net>