

# August Spice Club:

## *Za'atar*



### *Suggested Reading*

*available to order on the Minerva catalog*

Rawia Bishara, *Olives, Lemons, and Za'atar: The Best Middle Eastern Home Cooking*

Reem Kassis, *The Arabesque Table: Contemporary Recipes from the Arab World*

Kim Kushner, *The Modern Table: Kosher Recipes for Everyday Gatherings*

Greg Malouf and Lucy Malouf, *Artichoke to Za'atar: Modern Middle Eastern Food*

Christine Sahadi Whelan, *Flavors of the Sun: The Sahadi's Guide to Understanding, Buying, and Using Middle Eastern Ingredients*

Habeeb Salloum, *Classic Vegetarian Cooking from the Middle East & North Africa*

# Za'atar

Versatile, intriguing, delicious za'atar! "Za'atar" generally refers to a spice blend that has existed in different iterations since medieval times. This spice blend is usually made up of sumac, oregano, marjoram, and sesame seeds. It is commonly used like salt in Middle Eastern countries – sprinkled over the top of any number of dishes, be that scrambled eggs, a tomato and cucumber salad, or French fries – and the sour, acidic note from the powdered sumac berries enhances flavor. For those eager to experiment, Sarah Jampel for Epicurious also suggests that za'atar pairs well with garlic, fresh tender herbs, lemon, toasted nuts, and chili flakes.

This Frontier Co-Op za'atar spice mix includes hyssop (za'atar), sesame seeds, sumac, thyme, and sea salt. Our recipes this month include a tried-and-true hummus much beloved by this author as well as a seasonal delight from Jampel to make the most of late summer tomatoes.

Best by January 2025, or whenever your spice is no longer fragrant. You can submit feedback or suggest future spices to Meghan at [mfogg@freeportmaine.com](mailto:mfogg@freeportmaine.com).

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Baharat (Portland)

Dina's Cuisine (Portland)

Enoteca Athena (Brunswick)

Falafel Time (Portland)

Mazzat (Portland)

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Olive Café (Portland)

Taverna Khione (Brunswick)

TIQA (Portland)

## *Fancy and Beautiful Tomato Salad*

Sarah Jampel, Epicurious

“Very loosely inspired by Lebanese *fattoush*, this is one of those dishes where you want to use only the ripest, most fragrant tomatoes in the bunch.”

- 1 ½ lbs. heirloom tomatoes (about 3 medium), sliced into 8-12 wedges, depending on size
- 12 oz. mixed cherry tomatoes (about 2 cups), halved, or quartered if large
- 1 ¾ teaspoons kosher salt, divided, plus more
- 1 lemon
- ½ garlic clove
- 6 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 tablespoons za’atar
- 2 cups pita chips
- 1 ½ teaspoons (or more) honey
- 3.5 oz. feta, thinly sliced into planks
- ½ cup basil leaves, torn if large
- ½ cup mint leaves, torn if large

Gently toss heirloom and cherry tomatoes and 1¼ tsp. salt in a medium bowl to combine and set aside. Finely grate lemon zest into a small bowl, then grate in garlic; set lemon aside.

Heat oil in a small saucepan or skillet over medium until just starting to shimmer. Add za’atar and cook, stirring occasionally, until fragrant and slightly darkened in color, about 1 minute. Add lemon zest and garlic, cook 10 seconds, then remove from heat. (You're looking to cook off the raw flavor of the garlic without losing the brightness of the lemon.) Transfer za’atar oil to a heatproof measuring cup.

Place pita chips in a large bowl and drizzle 2 tablespoons za’atar oil over it; season with salt. Mix well with a rubber spatula, aiming to coat chips without breaking them into too many pieces.

Cut reserved lemon in half and squeeze juice from 1 lemon half into a small bowl. Stir in honey and remaining ½ tsp. salt. Gradually add remaining za'atar oil, stirring constantly until emulsified. Taste dressing and add more lemon juice, honey, or salt if needed.

Add feta, basil, mint, and reserved tomatoes to bowl with chips and drizzle dressing over; toss gently to combine. Spoon salad onto platter, making sure to leave no juices behind. Eat fast for crunchy chips or let sit for a crispy-gone-soggy experience. 6 servings.

# *Easy Hummus*

Adam and Joanne Gallagher, Inspired Taste

“The secret to the smoothest, most luxurious hummus is the order in which you add ingredients to your food processor. [...] We love serving this with flatbread.”

- 1 (15-ounce) can chickpeas or 1 ½ cups cooked chickpeas
- ¼ cup fresh lemon juice, 1 large lemon
- ¼ cup well-stirred tahini
- 1 small garlic clove, minced
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, plus more for serving
- ½ teaspoon ground cumin
- Salt to taste
- 2-3 tablespoons water
- Dash za’atar, ground paprika or sumac for serving

In the bowl of a food processor, combine tahini and lemon juice and process for 1 minute; scrape the sides and bottom of the bowl then process for 30 seconds more.

Add the olive oil, minced garlic, cumin, and a ½ teaspoon of salt to the whipped tahini and lemon juice. Process for 30 seconds, scrape the sides and bottom of the bowl then process another 30 seconds or until well blended. Open, drain, and rinse the chickpeas. Add half of the chickpeas to the food processor and process for 1 minute. Scrape sides and bottom of the bowl, then add remaining chickpeas and process until thick and quite smooth, 1-2 minutes.

The hummus may be too thick or still have tiny bits of chickpea. To fix this, with the food processor turned on, slowly add 2 to 3 tablespoons of water until you reach the perfect consistency.

Taste for salt and adjust as needed. Serve hummus with a drizzle of olive oil and dash of za’atar, sumac, or paprika. Makes 6 servings or ~ 1 ½ cups. Store homemade hummus in an airtight container and refrigerate up to one week.

*(Note: If using a blender, you’ll need to scrape down the sides and blend a few more times for each step to make sure everything is coming together properly. The final product is worth the extra hassle, so don’t cut corners!)*