

LOVE STARTS IN THE KITCHEN!™

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CUCUMBER YOGURT DIP

Similar to the Greek Tzaki, but less pungent, this is a typical mezza, appetizer in Lebanon. A good quality yogurt like Brown Cow which you'll find in Natural Foods (a special this week!) is essential for great taste. Go to taste on this. You can always add more of the herbs. If you are using dry herbs, use less. Note that I am giving lots of optional herbs here. My Mother's recipe simply used garlic and mint. I love to add other herbs as indicated below for layers of flavor.

- 2 cups plain yogurt
- ½ English cucumber, diced finely
- ½ to 1 teaspoon garlic, minced
- Mint: two sprigs, 2" long each
- Dill: two sprigs, 1" long each (opt)
- Cumin: ½ to 1 teaspoon (opt)
- Cilantro: one sprig, 2" long (opt)
- Sea Salt and Cayenne Pepper to taste

Mix all together. Serve with flat bread, olives and crudites of your choice.

Variations:

Use instead of mayonnaise on sandwiches. I love to stuff whole wheat pita halves or make wraps with whole wheat flat bread or tortillas, using seasonal fresh chopped veggies to make a delicious vegetarian sandwich. (Try chopped tomatoes, shredded cheese, olives, sprouts, red onion, carrots, celery, etc.). It's also delicious as a spread on roast beef sandwiches or as a topping for baked or broiled seafood.

RITA'S HERB OF THE WEEK: CHIVES

Chives are a member of the onion family, and are hardy perennials. There are two kinds that we grow here: onion and garlic chives. Their flavor is not as pungent as onions and garlic, but they do have wonderful healing qualities. They are called the gentle healer because, as members of the onion and garlic family, chives are great for your heart. Onion chives have straw like leaves with pink flowers; garlic chives have flat leaves with white flowers. Both make wonderful vinegars. (Excerpted from my book *Culinary Herbs that Heal Body and Soul*).

READ RITA!

My books *Gifts without Ribbons*, *Culinary Herbs that Heal Body and Soul*,

***The Official Snack Guide for Beleaguered Sports parents and Sports Nutrition for Dummies* (I developed the recipes) are available at Jungle Jims**

RITA'S YUMMY BREAD BLENDS!

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