

Ahmed's Falafel (Egypt)



This delicious dish is a recipe from Ahmed who originally comes from Egypt. Falafel is a favourite street snack on the streets of London, it is also an essential and much-loved part of Middle Eastern cuisine. Ask a Palestinian, Syrian, Lebanese and Egyptian about their favourite falafel recipes and you will get four different answers!

Ahmed became a refugee in the UK in 2015. He first learnt to make falafel from his mother. In Egypt it is traditionally eaten for breakfast and contains coriander and basil, which gives it a green colour - something unthinkable outside of North Africa! When visiting his mother, Ahmed would wake up from the smell of freshly made falafel before the family gathered to eat together every morning. *'When we were children, my father would tell us 'You will lose your life if you don't eat a proper breakfast in the morning!'*

Ahmed will be dishing up his very own falafel @breddostacos in Clerkenwell as part of London's very first Refugee Food Festival.

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@refugeeweekuk @refugeefoodfestival

FULL RECIPE

Ingredients:

200 g dry chickpeas (not from the can)
1 medium onion
1 spring onion
3 garlic cloves
3-4 stems of coriander



A small handful of Basil leaves
1 tablespoon of sesame seeds for extra crunch (optional)
Around 500 ml of vegetable oil
Salt

Method:

Put the dried chickpeas in a large bowl and cover them with water. The water should be around 10cm above the chickpeas so they can absorb enough water. Leave to drain for a day or overnight changing the water three or four times if you can.

Cut the onions and put all ingredients, except the vegetable oil and salt, in a food processor or blender. If you're using a blender add a spoon of water to allow the ingredients to mix well. Add more water if needed, but don't let the mixture get too liquidy.

Heat the vegetable oil in a high saucepan until it's very hot – about 180°. Add salt to the falafel mixture and stir it in well allowing the air to get into the mixture. Only add the salt right before you bake the falafel and immediately put in hot oil. Take a handful of the salted mixture in your hand and squeeze it, using the mixture coming out between your thumb and index finger to form a small ball. Alternatively, you can just use a tablespoon of the mixture to make the balls.

Fry as many falafel balls as can comfortably fit into the saucepan for no longer than 1-3 minutes allowing the balls to come up to the surface once they're ready. Take them out of the oil and leave them to dry on a paper kitchen towel. Enjoy wrapped in flat Arabic bread with pickles and salad leaves, with a side salad or any other dishes you might fancy! If you want to keep any of the paste for later, don't add any salt and put the mixture in the freezer.