Sweet Potato Falafel With Za'atar Yogurt Sauce Recipe

Nutrition Highlights (per serving)

CALORIES 316 FAT 14g CARBS 38g PROTEIN12g

Total Time **105 min**   
Prep **30 min**, Cook **75 min**   
Servings **4 (4 balls + 2 T sauce each)**

Sweet potatoes are an autumn favorite that often pop up in unexpected dishes—and for good reason! They are high in the carotenoid beta-carotene, which is the precursor to [Vitamin A](https://www.verywellfit.com/top-foods-containing-vitamin-a-2505911).

[Carotenoids](https://www.verywellfit.com/what-is-a-carotenoid-4083052) are antioxidants that boost immunity and protect against cancer. This recipe uses sweet potato as a base for a delicious pan-seared falafel. Serve the falafel with a heavy drizzle of cool tahini yogurt sauce and lots of fresh crunchy vegetables and herbs.

Ingredients

* 2 medium sweet potatoes
* 1.5 teaspoons ground cumin
* 1 teaspoon ground coriander
* 1 teaspoon za'atar
* 1/4 cup chopped fresh parsley or cilantro
* 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice (from half a lemon)
* 1 cup chickpea flour
* 1/4 teaspoon salt
* 2 tablespoons canola oil, for pan-frying
* 1 cup plain non-fat Greek yogurt
* 2 tablespoons tahini
* 1/2 teaspoon lemon zest
* 1 tablespoon lemon juice
* 1 teaspoon ground cumin
* 1/2 teaspoon za'atar
* 1/4 teaspoon salt
* 2 tablespoons chopped parsley or cilantro
* 1 small garlic clove, pressed or crushed into a paste

Preparation

1. Preheat oven to 425F.
2. Poke the sweet potatoes all around with a fork, wrap in foil, and bake in the oven for 45 minutes to an hour, until tender. Let cool.
3. Scoop out the inner flesh of the sweet potatoes and place in a large bowl. Mash the potatoes and add in the spices, herbs, lemon zest, chickpea flour, lemon juice, and salt.
4. Place the mixture in the refrigerator for 30 to 60 minutes to chill and firm up (you can also do this ahead of time and let sit in the refrigerator overnight).
5. Scoop out the falafel mixture by the heaping tablespoon and roll into balls.
6. Heat a cast iron or heavy skillet over medium-high heat. Add 1 tablespoon canola oil and drop in half of the falafel balls. Cook 3 minutes per side or until golden brown on the outsides and cooked through on the inside. Repeat with remaining tablespoon oil and falafels.
7. To make the yogurt sauce: Whisk together the yogurt, tahini, lemon zest and juice, spices, salt herbs, and garlic. Taste and adjust seasonings as needed.
8. Serve the falafels atop a salad with a drizzle of yogurt sauce, crunchy vegetables, and extra herbs.

Ingredient Variations and Substitutions

Try this recipe with 1.5 cups pumpkin puree in place of the sweet potato for a similar color and nutrition profile with a slightly different flavor. Can't have dairy? Instead of the yogurt sauce, serve the falafel with smashed fresh [chickpeas](https://www.verywellfit.com/chickpeas-nutrition-facts-calories-and-health-benefits-4118486) with red onion and herbs, homemade or store-bought [hummus](https://www.verywellfit.com/hummus-nutrition-facts-calories-and-health-benefits-4111290), or a mix of equal parts tahini paste and water with lemon juice and garlic to taste.

Having company? Create a mezze platter with the falafel and a bunch of Mediterranean-style salads (think tomato and cucumber, tabouli, or cabbage slaw) and dipping sauces and spreads (hummus, babaganoush) for people to sample.

Cooking and Serving Tips

Roast the sweet potato a day or 2 ahead to speed up the falafel making process.

Spread the discarded sweet potato skins on a baking sheet and drizzle with a little olive oil and bake in a 350F oven for 20 to 30 minutes until the skins have crisped up into delicious chip-like pieces. Or save the to use in the Chicken Fajita Sweet Potato Skins recipe

The tahini yogurt sauce contains one clove of fresh garlic, which adds a pungent savory flavor. Raw pressed, chopped, or crushed garlic contains the ingredients to make a compound called allicin, which helps form a variety of organosulfur products that may aid in the prevention of chronic diseases like cancer and cardiovascular disease. When chopping garlic that will eventually be cooked, just let it rest on the counter for 10 minutes before cooking so that you can activate the allicin before the garlic hits the heat.

*This recipe adheres to*[*recipe guidelines*](http://www.aicr.org/healthyrecipes/aicr-recipe-guidelines.html)*and cancer prevention recommendations outlined by the American Institute for Cancer Research.*