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Spice of the Month

take and make kit

May's spice is:

Sesame

The sesame plant likely originated in Asia or East Africa, and ancient Egyptians are known to have used the ground seed as grain flour. The seeds were used by the Chinese at least 5,000 years ago, and for centuries they have burned the oil to make soot for the finest Chinese ink blocks. The Romans ground sesame seeds with cumin to make a pasty spread for bread. Once it was thought to have mystical powers, and sesame still retains a magical quality, as shown in the expression "open sesame," from the Arabian Nights tale of "Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves."

Sesame oil is used as a salad oil or cooking oil, in shortening and margarine, and in the manufacture of soaps, pharmaceuticals, and lubricants. Sesame oil is used as an ingredient in cosmetics. The press cake remaining after the oil is expressed is highly nutritious.

The whole seed is used extensively in the cuisines of the Middle East and Asia. Halvah is a confection made of crushed and sweetened sesame seeds. In Europe and North America the seeds are used to flavor and garnish various foods, particularly breads and other baked goods.

Tahini, a sesame seed paste, is believed to have originated in the Middle East, particularly in the Levant, Egypt, and Turkey. The word "tahini" comes from the Arabic word "tahn," meaning "ground".

How to Use Sesame Seeds:

Sesame seeds work particularly well with chicken and other meats and in warm salads and salad dressings. They also add a distinctive flavor to stir-fried and rice dishes. Ground sesame seeds are used to make tahini, a smooth paste commonly added to Middle Eastern dishes.

For more information visit:

<https://www.britannica.com/plant/sesame-plant>

Register for future kits at:
[tuxedoparklibrary.org/spice](https://www.tuxedoparklibrary.org/spice)

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Tahini Banana Bread

Makes 6-8 servings

Time: 3hr 5min (includes cooling time)

from Food Network Kitchen:

<https://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/food-network-kitchen/tahini-banana-bread-5500704>

INGREDIENTS:

- Nonstick cooking spray, for the pan
- 2 cups all-purpose flour (see Cook's Note)
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 2 large eggs
- 2/3 cup plus 2 tablespoons tahini
- 4 very ripe bananas, mashed (about 1 cup)
- 1/2 cup vegetable oil
- 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon black sesame seeds
- 1 teaspoon white sesame seeds
- 3 tablespoons confectioners' sugar



INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Preheat the oven to 325 degrees F. Spray a 9-by-5-inch glass loaf pan with cooking spray.
2. Whisk the flour, baking powder, baking soda and salt in a medium bowl. Add the granulated sugar, eggs and 2/3 cup tahini to the bowl of an electric mixer fitted with the paddle attachment and beat on medium speed until creamy, 3 to 4 minutes. Reduce the speed to low and add the bananas, oil, vanilla and cinnamon. Add the flour in 3 batches, making sure it is well combined after each addition.
3. Pour the batter into the prepared pan. Mix the black and white sesame seeds in a small bowl and sprinkle on top. Bake until deep golden brown and a skewer inserted into the center comes out clean or mostly clean with some moist crumbs clinging to it, about 1 hour and 20 minutes. Let cool in the pan for 15 minutes, then remove to a wire rack to cool completely, about 1 hour.
4. Stir together the confectioners' sugar, 4 teaspoons warm water and the remaining 2 tablespoons tahini in a small bowl until smooth. Drizzle the top of the bread with the glaze.

Cook's Note

When measuring flour, we spoon it into a dry measuring cup and level off excess. (Scooping directly from the bag compacts the flour, resulting in dry baked goods.)

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Sesame Chicken

Makes 6 Servings • Time: 40 Minutes

from Dinner at the Zoo:

<https://www.dinneratthezoo.com/lighter-honey-sesame-chicken>

INGREDIENTS:

For the chicken:

- 1 1/2 lbs boneless skinless chicken breasts cut into 1 inch pieces
- 2 eggs beaten
- salt and pepper to taste
- 1/2 cup all purpose flour
- 1/2 cup cornstarch
- oil for frying

For the sauce:

- 1 teaspoon vegetable oil
- 1 teaspoon minced fresh garlic
- 1/4 cup honey
- 1/4 cup soy sauce (reduced sodium if possible)
- 2 tablespoons ketchup
- 3 tablespoons brown sugar
- 2 tablespoons rice vinegar
- 1 tablespoon toasted sesame oil
- 2 teaspoons cornstarch
- 2 tablespoons sesame seeds
- 2 tablespoons sliced green onions



INSTRUCTIONS:

- Place the eggs, salt and pepper in a bowl. Stir to combine
- Place the flour and 1/2 cup of cornstarch in a shallow bowl or on a plate. Stir to combine.
- Dip each piece of chicken into the egg mixture, then into the flour. Repeat the process with all of the chicken.
- Heat 3 inches of oil in a deep pan to 350 degrees F
- Add 7-8 pieces of chicken to the pan. Cook for 5 minutes or until crispy and golden brown. Repeat the process with the remaining chicken
- Drain the chicken on paper towels
- While the chicken is cooking, combine the honey, soy sauce, ketchup, brown sugar, rice vinegar, sesame oil and 2 teaspoons of cornstarch in a bowl.
- Heat the teaspoon of oil in a large pan over medium heat. Add the garlic and cook for 30 seconds. Add the honey sauce mixture and bring to a simmer. Cook for 3-4 minutes or until just thickened.
- Add the crispy chicken to the pan and toss to coat with the sauce. Sprinkle with sesame seeds and green onions, then serve.

Notes: The sauce can be made up to two days before you plan to serve it.

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Sesame Almond Slaw

Makes 2 servings • Time: 20 minutes

from Taste of Home:

<https://www.tasteofhome.com/recipes/sesame-almond-slaw>

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 package (3 ounces) ramen noodles
- 3/4 cup shredded cabbage
- 3/4 cup shredded romaine
- 2 tablespoons sliced green onion
- 2 teaspoons slivered almonds, toasted
- 2 teaspoons sesame seeds, toasted
- 1 tablespoon rice vinegar
- 1-1/2 teaspoons sugar
- 1-1/2 teaspoons canola oil
- 1 teaspoon water
- 1/2 teaspoon sesame oil
- 1/4 teaspoon reduced-sodium soy sauce
- Dash salt
- Dash pepper



STEPS:

1. Split ramen noodles in half and save the seasoning and half of the noodles for another use. Break apart remaining noodles; place in a bowl. Add the cabbage, romaine, onion, toasted almonds and sesame seeds.
2. For dressing, in a jar with a tight-fitting lid, combine the next 8 ingredients; shake well. Add dressing to salad and toss to coat. Serve immediately.

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Sweet Seed & Nut Snack Bites

Makes 10 servings

Time: Cook time: 15 min Prep, 30 Minutes to Firm Up

Recipe from Cookbook: Sesame by Rachel Simons

INGREDIENTS:

- 10 medjool dates, pitted
- 1 cup toasted almonds, pecans, or hazelnuts
- (or a mix of any of these)
- 3 tablespoons tahini
- 2 tablespoons cacao nibs
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt
- 1 to 2 tablespoons maple syrup or date syrup plus more to taste and for rolling (optional)
- For the coating:
- ¼ cup coating of your choice (such as shredded coconut, cacao powder, sesame seeds, finely chopped pistachios, or berry powder)



STEPS:

1. Make the balls in a medium bowl, soak the dates in boiling water until soft, about 10 minutes, then drain.
2. Place the nuts in a food processor and pulse until finely chopped.
3. Add the soaked dates, the tahini, cacao nibs, and salt to the food processor with the nuts and pulse until the mixture is combined, scraping the sides of the bowl midway. The mixture should resemble a sticky dough.
4. Scoop 10 golf ball-size portions of the dough and roll them in the palm of your hand until rounded.
5. Place the desired coating in a shallow bowl and roll each ball in the coating until well covered. If the coating doesn't stick, roll the balls in a touch of date syrup or maple syrup before adding the coating.
6. Refrigerate the balls for 30 minutes, until firm, then serve.

Notes: These will last in an airtight container in the freezer for up to 3 months.