

CHICKPEA CUTLETS

MAKES 4 CUTLETS / TIME: 30 MIN

- 1 cup cooked chickpeas (page 41)
- 2 tablespoons olive oil, plus more for panfrying
- ½ cup vital wheat gluten
- ½ cup plain vegan bread crumbs
- ¼ cup vegetable broth, purchased or homemade (page 223), or water
- 2 tablespoons soy sauce
- 2 cloves garlic, pressed or grated with a Microplane grater
- ½ teaspoon freshly grated lemon zest
- ½ teaspoon dried thyme
- ½ teaspoon Hungarian paprika
- ¼ teaspoon rubbed dried sage

NOTE

In the decade that we've been making these, there've been countless instances of experimentation.

In the first edition, we predicted that these babies would take over blogs everywhere. And for once in our lives we were right! These have become a staple at many a vegan table, for weeknight meals or for a Thanksgiving centerpiece. A combination of chickpeas and vital wheat gluten formed into savory cutlets, it's perfect for when you want something "meaty" but don't want to go through the trouble of making seitan. We serve these cutlets in myriad ways, packed into sandwiches or smothered in mustard sauce, with a side of mashed potatoes and roasted asparagus. It's vegan food that you can eat with a steak knife and, best of all, it is fast and easy. You'll probably want to double the recipe if you're serving it to guests.

Mash the chickpeas together with the oil in a mixing bowl until no whole chickpeas are left. Add the remaining ingredients and knead for about 3 minutes, until strings of gluten have formed.

Preheat a large, heavy-bottomed nonstick or cast-iron skillet over medium heat. Meanwhile, divide the cutlet dough into four equal pieces. To form the cutlets, knead each piece in your hand for a few moments and then flatten and stretch each one into a roughly 6 x 4-inch rectangular cutlet shape. The easiest way to do this is to first form a rectangular shape in your hands and then place the cutlets on a clean surface to flatten and stretch them.

Add a moderately thin layer of olive oil to the bottom of the pan. Place the cutlets in the pan and cook on each side for 6 to 7 minutes. Add more oil, if needed, when you flip the cutlets. They're ready when lightly browned and firm to the touch.

Just in case you were wondering, you can bake these, too! Baking these patties gives them a toothsome chewy texture and firm bite. Preheat the oven to 375°F and lightly oil a baking sheet. Brush both sides of each patty with olive oil, place on the prepared baking sheet, and bake for 20 minutes. Flip the patties and bake for another 8 to 10 minutes, until firm and golden brown.

VARIATIONS

WHOLE CAN CUTLETS: Try using the whole 14- or 15-ounce can of chickpeas, which totals just under 2 cups. The patties hold up just fine and will be a little softer and with just a little extra chickpea flavor and texture.

SUN-DRIED TOMATO CUTLETS: Knead in ⅓ cup of finely chopped sun-dried tomatoes

BLACK OLIVE CUTLETS: Knead in ½ cup of pitted and chopped black olives. For fullest flavor, go for a real olive, such as kalamata or oil-cured black olives. A tablespoon of fresh rosemary (leave out the sage) ups the Mediterranean flavor game.

