

If you're looking for a delicious, colorful and nutritious summer salad, side-stepping the predictable bowl of tossed mixed greens, grab your can opener.

My recipe blends pantry ingredients with sun-ripened garden vegetables, then finishes with fresh-squeezed lime and roasted-cumin dressing. Prep time is quick. The secret, only requiring a minute or two, is roasting the cumin to unlock a nutty, earthy taste. After bringing all flavors together, serve immediately or chill to marinate overnight.

Growing up in a very Italian family, these velvety legumes were only referred to as chi chi beans. It wasn't until my teen years that I discovered they were also called garbanzo beans, or chick peas.

Garbanzos are often the basic ingredient in our favorite hummus, but it doesn't stop there. You'll find a plethora of delicious uses in recipes for soups, veggie burgers and some outstanding desserts. So, no matter how you refer to these versatile little vegetables, they serve up a lot of goodness, without the guilt.

CHI CHI AND ROASTED CUMIN SALAD

1 generous teaspoon ground cumin

2 tablespoons olive oil

2 tablespoons lime juice (about the juice of 1 medium fresh lime)

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Himalayan salt, to taste

Fresh ground black pepper, to taste

1 (15 oz.) can low-sodium garbanzo beans, rinsed, drained

1 celery rib, washed, sliced

2 Roma tomatoes or 16 small cherry tomatoes, washed, sliced

1 small red onion, thinly sliced then chopped (use less if you desire)

½ cup sliced black olives

1 cup shredded mozzarella, or ½ cup crumbled feta

Optional: 1 half small English cucumber, sliced then quartered

In small frying pan, on medium heat, place ground cumin. Quickly stir to roast, with a broad-edged wood spatula, up to two minutes. Cumin will darken as you move it around the pan. The key is to stir constantly. Remove from heat and cool thoroughly.

In medium mixing bowl, place drained garbanzo beans, celery, tomatoes, onion and black olives. Blend well and set aside.

In small bowl, combine olive oil, lime juice, salt and pepper. Whisk to incorporate all flavors. When roasted cumin has cooled, carefully transfer into the oil and lime mixture. Stir well and pour over the garbanzo salad. Toss ingredients together. Add cheese just before serving. Makes 4 servings.

— "Mormon Mama Italian Cookbook," by Shannon M. Smurthwaite

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