

6-Layer Mediterranean Dip with Tnuva Labaneh + Feta



Shalom! Reporting live from the couch where I'm currently enjoying our 2nd day of winter break. I'm trying to ignore the ridiculous episode of Miraculous that my oldest is enjoying after her hour of quiet reading time. Yes, you heard me correctly – an hour of quiet time. This is not me bragging.

This is me celebrating! This is the first winter break where we've finally nailed down a schedule and nailed it down quickly + it's going well (I mean, it's day 2 so . . .). Anyway, our schedule is looking like this:

1. Wake up (no TV before 7 AM)
2. 2 Shows + play
3. Breakfast
4. Shower/get dressed
5. Morning activity out of the house
6. Lunch
7. Nap for littles + quiet for Siona
8. 1 hour afternoon TV time
9. Pre-dinner play
10. Dinner
11. After dinner play + 1 episode of Nailed It!
12. Bed

Good Lord. When you look at it it's a bit more exhausting. The husband + I are SO blessed to have this break alongside the kiddos since we both work in schools. It's the time we get to actually enjoy the kids instead of running around like maniacs on a Sunday trying to balance errands with quality time with the kids. The first semester of this year has been insanely busy as I started doing consulting and facilitating workshops on adolescent development and diet culture outside of my regular work at the school I work for plus trying to be present for the kids + this here blog. It's a lot to juggle and sometimes I can do it and sometimes, well, not-so-much.

Today's morning activity, however, was truly a study in how joy can facilitate connection + deeper relationships. I find that sometimes, even though I truly love the life I live, I'm not having as much fun living it as I could because I am constantly moving from one thing to the other. I feel like I'm constantly telling my kids to, 'Hurry! We're late!' So this 2-week break I am committing myself to one thing – taking it easy and being more present in the moment. So this morning we

grabbed the kids + headed out to Santa Monica where we rented a family-sized bucket bike and went riding on the boardwalk path along the beach. I'm not sure the last time I laughed that much. And sure, I almost ran the family into a sand dune but still! The sun was shining, we were smart enough to bring snacks, the girls had their scooters and we just went for it!





The other place I am taking it easy this winter break is in the kitchen! And while I'd love to be eating out nonstop because I love eating at restaurants + also I love someone else doing the cleaning + cooking, we can't afford that life. That said, I do plan on keeping meals simple + using leftovers as much as possible. Case in point, this 6-layer Mediterranean dip featuring my favorite labaneh + feta from Tnuva. I made the fried eggplant for another dish from earlier in the week so when it came to making something fresh and yummy for a Chanukah gathering we were hosting, I snagged those leftovers + added my favorite flavors to make a Mediterranean version of

a classic 7-layer dip taco (only minus one layer mainly because it wouldn't fit into my cute little glass dish – if it would have, I would have added roasted cauliflower). This dip can be made in individual little containers like this one or in a giant dip bowl for sharing. If you aren't afraid of a little spice, the feta and labaneh would pair wonderfully with a spicy harrisa. You can also take this dip out of the bowl and enjoy it over some tortilla chips as Mediterranean nachos or pair it with some falafel balls for a yummy falafel pita sandwich or deconstructed salad. The world is your delicious, kosher oyster, people! Go for it!





6-Layer Mediterranean Dip with Tnuva Labaneh + Feta

Ingredients:

1 eggplant, chopped

Canola oil for frying (roughly 2 – 3 cups)

kosher salt

2 Roma tomatoes, diced

1 cup of Tnuva labaneh, divided

1/2 chopped feta, divided

1/4 cup sliced Israeli green olives

Handful of cilantro, finely chopped

Method:

For frying the eggplant – Layout paper towels. Slice the eggplant into 1/2 inch thick rounds and place onto the paper towels making sure they aren't overlapping. Sprinkle the slices with kosher salt and let sit for about 25 – 30 minutes. This will draw out the moisture making sure the eggplant is crispy and not soggy. After 30 minutes, dab the eggplants with one of the paper towels already out to soak up the water that's collected on top of the eggplant. Next, place a large frying pan with enough oil to fill the pan to the midway up the pan. While the oil is heating, chop eggplants into cubes. Once the oil is fully hot (test this by dropping a small droplet of water into the pan. If it immediately sizzles, the oil is hot enough and ready for frying). Place about half the eggplant cubes into the pan (you don't want the eggplant cubes to be on top of each other). Let the eggplant cubes fry until golden brown while occasionally stirring throughout the process. Once one batch is done, remove from frying pan and place on a paper towel to absorb excess oil. Finish this process until all cubes are fried.

Assembly (this is to your discretion but I went with the following) –

Put labaneh on the bottom layer. Next, add the eggplant + chopped tomatoes + feta cheese + green olives + chopped cilantro. Top with a drizzle of your favorite hot sauce or harrisa to add a little kick to your dip (and to get you to an even 7-layers).

*This post was absolutely sponsored by Tnuva, a company whose products I genuinely love to eat.

Sabich Bowl with Miso + Cilantro Tahini



Sabich Bowl w/miso + cilantro Tahini

It's hard to really care about something as superficial as pretty food these days. Last weekend, when the world was in shock after the devastating murder of 49 innocent *neshamas* (souls) in Pulse nightclub in Orlando, my family and I were welcoming day 2 of a 3 day holiday (Shabbat into *Shavuot*). Because we are pretty observant, we observe the letter of the

law when it comes to Jewish holidays. Not only do we enjoy our festive meals (hey, just doing our part to follow the mitzvahs commanded of us!), but we also don't operate electricity on those days as well, which means we had no idea this brutal act had occurred since we weren't opening our phones or turning on TVs and computers. It wasn't until some friends mentioned something in passing on Sunday night that we knew something had happened. By Monday night, when the 3-day holiday was over, I braced myself for what I knew was going to be an onslaught of terrible news. Little did I know it would be as gut-wrenching as it was. In reading all the news, I felt so incredibly grateful for the 3 days of comfort we had created in our holiday bubble. We went into the holiday praying for the relief of peace after the disgusting murder of Israelis in a Tel Aviv restaurant that occurred on Thursday. But, and I know this is so troubling, as a Jewish family, we've grown accustomed to the news that our people were attacked. We're so used to praying for peace that it's an automatic prayer. I don't even really think about when I pray for peace. It just is what it is. But I woke up on Tuesday morning, after reading news article after new article on the events that occurred that fateful night in Orlando nearly a week and a half ago, and I felt darkness. I called my best friend, Jackie, and we talked it out, as we do with everything. "Jackie", I said, "I feel sad. I feel so, so sad". She listened. She validated. She tried to give me comfort but I knew any comfort I would get would need to come from within. I still haven't quite found it yet and I'm pretty sure I never truly will. We live in a world where, as a school employee, I had to sit through "active shooter" training because going into education is now a dangerous job. When my nearly 4 year-old daughter plays school, she pretends to check bags before you can enter into the 'school', just like the security team does before we can enter her early childhood center. She has no clue what she's 'checking' for, but the whole thing is so disturbing. My heart hurts.





I will continue to pray for peace because it gives me some sort of solace. I will also continue to cook, caring a little less each day about silly things like how many Instagram followers Jewhungry has or how many page views this post will get. I will call my Congress people and I will sign petitions and I will pray that peace will come.





Speaking of food, have you ever heard of sabich? Sabich and shakshuka are in contention for being my favorite dish to eat in Israel. In my book, it definitely out-ranks falafel. It's all about the perfect fried eggplant (my favorite vegetable), the right amount of salty tahini and a generous helping of crisp Israeli salad mixed in with Israeli pickles and loads and loads of cilantro. I like to add a little lot of feta cheese to my sabich sandwich cause it's feta cheese and why wouldn't I? But to save myself some fullness from the pita, and because my oldest doesn't eat sandwiches, I've been putting all my sabich fixin's onto a fluffy pile of rice spiced with all those flavors of the Mediterranean. I'm talkin' cumin, coriander, tumeric and, of course, salt. I hope

you try this out and truly enjoy! Have a wonderful day!





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Double Chocolate Chunk Muffins with Tahini Glaze



Double Chocolate Chunk Muffins *with* Tahini Glaze

My friend Julee doesn't like muffins. Like, not at all. Please

know, before you start judging the crap outta my friend, Julee, she is one of the greatest human beings of all time. She is an academic support specialist at the school I work at. Her office is right next to mine. We share a love of 90s hip hop, cheese, fried food and Tracee Ellis Ross. She's also my editor on all things including, but not limited to, Huffington Post blog entries, letters to parents, emails to colleagues and my husband's CV. There's literally nothing I wouldn't do for her. So imagine my surprise when I texted her one afternoon, wondering if she was into muffins. I mean, I assumed she would say, 'Of course!', but nope! She said 'no'. What the whaaaaaat? I mean, I've met some weirdos in my day (I went to social work school with a girl who hated soup. Who hates soup!? Its soup!). But not liking muffins? That's crazy talk (the actual conversation, including appropriate Bitmoji, is shown below). So obviously, I mean, challenge accepted.

●○○○○ AT&T

2:41 PM



< Messages

Julee

Details

Word

Yesterday 4:00 PM

How do you feel about muffins?

Not a fan.



Challenge accepted

No! I don't need to like anymore food!

Yesterday 6:20 PM



iMessage







My oldest and I will often spend one afternoon after school doing some baking. In order to make sure we do not eat all the baked goods from our session, I bring the majority of what we baked to work with me the next day. So one day a few weeks ago I brought in Danielle Oron's Tahini Chocolate Chip cookies. Upon eating them, Julee dubbed them the greatest thing I've

ever made (I should clarify that she was already one of my favorite people when she said that but upon hearing her praise, the deal was sealed on her being in the Top 3 Greatest People of All Time). So when she saved my butt one morning last week when I was running late because of kid issues and helped proctor a test that I was supposed to proctor, I promised her I would bake her whatever she wanted. So she asked for the cookies. I said I would make them but then the whole muffin exchange happened and well, this recipe was born. I figured, why not take the flavor profile of the cookies and make them into delicious muffins? She'll love them!



So was she a fan? Well, she liked them enough to eat one, smile and say, "Ok, I like these", but not enough to take home the entire box I brought for her. But my girl, Cheryl? Cheryl loved them! YAY, Cheryl!!! Also, so did my entire

family and every other normal human being. Sorry, Jules. I guess you can't win them all.



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