

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.

Twice-Baked Potatoes with Labaneh and Za'atar



I can't believe this is real but there was a time in my life when I did not like labaneh and za'atar – together or apart. I did not like it. I'm so ashamed to admit this about myself because they are such an integral part of Israeli cuisine and I am 100% on board with all things Israeli cuisine. I distinctly remember once, in 2008, when I was living abroad for the year studying at the Pardes Institute of Judaic

Studies, a trip I went on for Shabbat. I cannot remember exactly where I was but I know it was a small Arab village that was known for its labaneh and I was determined to give labaneh another try. Folks had raved about this tiny village and their labaneh and by golly, I was going to like it! In case you don't, labaneh is technically a yogurt only it's been strained to filter or remove the whey. It's a classic Middle Eastern dairy spread that tastes like if Greek yogurt and sour cream had a delicious, creamy baby. And while I did try that tiny village's labaneh, I still didn't like it at the time.

I am happy to report, however, that times and tastes have changed in the last 11 years since I tried that labaneh. I don't know what happened. Maybe I've actually matured in taste palette as well as in life!? Maybe it was all that labaneh I've seen on some of my most favorite Israeli cuisine chefs (shalom, Adeena Sussman!). Whatever it is, my new Shabbat morning breakfast is labaneh, roasted cherry tomatoes, Israeli salad, and pita chips. I now have this little breakfast every Shabbat morning; I love labaneh that much.



Therefore, when the folks at Tnuva asked me if I would be interested in partnering on a few recipe posts I was more than happy to be ALL in!

Fun Fact: Since 1926 (almost 100 years!) Tnuva has been the world's leading premium kosher cheese provider. They've expanded to include many other products like puff pastry and harissa, all made in Israel! GIMME ALL THE HARISSA AND PUFF PASTRY!

My first recipe in this dream partnership is a Twice-Baked Potato with my old friends, labaneh and za'atar—a flavor match made in heaven! I don't want to trigger anyone into an anxiety spiral but the Jewish holidays this year just destroyed me. There was so much cooking and grocery shopping and meat consumption that I decided that for Thanksgiving this year, we would host a vegetarian potluck Friendsgiving and I will FOR SURE be making these delicious twice-baked potato friends for that dinner. Twice-baked potatoes are so creamy, filled with flavor and are the perfect canvas for Tnuva's rich and delicious 5% labaneh. The creaminess of the labaneh is an easy and scrumptious way to create the smoothness needed for pipping back into the potato skin boat. If you don't have a star piping tip or piping bags, feel free to just scoop the labaneh + potato mixture back into the potato skins. The piping is just to up the fancy factor.





Twice Baked Potatoes with Labaneh and Za'atar

Ingredients:

1 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp olive oil

4 6-ounce Russet potatoes, scrubbed

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup Tvuna Labaneh

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup half and half

3 tbsp unsalted butter

2 tbsp finely chopped chives

3 tbsp finely chopped dill

1 $\frac{1}{2}$ tbsp za'atar

1.5 tbsp kosher salt

1 tbsp garlic powder

Directions:

Position rack in center of oven; preheat to 375°F.

Rub oil over potatoes. Pierce in several spots with a fork. Place directly on oven rack; bake until very tender, about 45 minutes. Transfer to rack; cool 10 minutes.

Using oven mitts, grasp 1 potato in hand. Using a serrated knife, cut off top 1/4 of potato. Using a spoon, scoop out potato, leaving 1/2-inch-thick shell; transfer potato flesh to a large bowl. Repeat with remaining potatoes. Mash potatoes until smooth. Mix in labaneh, then half and half, butter, za'atar, dill, and chives. Season with salt and garlic powder.

Spoon about 3/4 of potato mixture into shells, dividing evenly. Transfer remaining potato filling to a pastry bag fitted with a large star tip. Pipe filling atop potatoes. Place potatoes on a baking sheet.

*All of the above can be done ahead by a day. Just cover loosely with pastic wrap and refrigerate.

Position rack in center of the oven and preheat to 375°F. Bake potatoes until filling is heated through and tops brown, about 20 minutes.

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I Heart Cheese: 18 Vegetarian Recipes featuring CHEESE!



**I HEART CHEESE:
18 VEGETARIAN
RECIPES - COLLATED
BY JEW HUNGRY,
THE BLOG.**

If you're new to this blog and are vegan and/or not so much a dairy eating then I need to give you a bit of a heads up -- I LOVE CHEESE. I mean, we are in a long-term committed relationship and have been since I was about 6 years old. Since I'm a kosher-keeper (and therefore, don't mix dairy with meat), I can't have cheese at every meal, which is probably a good thing. I don't want to jinx anything, but it is a wonder

that I'm not on the floor in the fetal position suffering from a kidney stone right about now . . . that's how much dairy I eat. For us Jews, the holiday of Shavuot is upon us and it's traditional to dig into the dairy for our Shavuot meal. As such, I thought it'd be fun to put out the call to my fellow food bloggers for some vegetarian recipes featuring cheese! I've got some of my own thrown in there for funsies and I do hope you enjoy.

Also, don't forget! Jewhungry swag is up on Etsy and running! I'm getting a restock in in about 10 days with bonus toddler sizing for the Israeli version. [Click here](#) to check it out – there's still time to get your order before Father's Day.



Za'atar White Bean Salad on Malawach from Jewhungry the Blog



Roasted Red Pepper Oven-Grilled Cheese from Dizzy, Busy, and Hungry



Cheesy Spinach Stuffed Shells from Peas and Crayons



Classic Thin Crust Three Cheese Pizza from Baked by Rachel



Cheesy Carrot Casserole with Bread Crumb Topping from Courtney's Sweets



Everything Bagel Cheesecake from Sweet Recipea



Marinated Cana de Cabra (Spanish Goat Cheese) from Everyday Maven



Easy Scalloped Potatoes from Recipes from a Pantry



Slow Cooker Beer Caramelized Onion Grilled Cheese Sandwiches
by The Beeroness



sherisilver.com

dinner irl: the best roasted vegetable lasagna from Sheri Silver



WARM ZUCCHINI NOODLE SALAD WITH TOMATOES AND HALLOUMI from Hey, Nutrition Lady



Airfryer Honey Goat Cheese Balls from The Creative Bite



Homemade Pimento Cheese Dip from Julie Blanner



Cheesy Pesto Farro from The Lemon Bowl



Cheesy Vegetarian Tofu Enchiladas from Vanilla and Bean



Crispy, Goopy Fresh Mozzarella Steaks from Foodie with Family



Dill and White Cheddar Sourdough from Karen's Kitchen



Savory Mashed Purple Potato Pie with Garlic Cream Cheese from Jewhungry the Blog