

# The Hummus Revolution

By Ameera David (Arab Detroit)

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Just ten years ago, no one but a handful of vegetarians had ever heard of hummus. Today, Nielson reports the existing market for hummus is at 250 million—with the dip now being declared the fastest growing deli item in supermarkets.

Now, in addition to choosing amongst different brands, the consumer can select from an array of new hummus flavors such as roasted red pepper and spicy cilantro. Hummus, which literally translates from Arabic to “chickpeas”, is a blend of garbanzo beans and sesame (tahini) paste.

Although the actual bean traces its roots to India and Europe, the hummus ingredients are known to be cultivated in

the ancient Mediterranean world. And while it has long been a staple in the diets of Middle Easterners, hummus is now acquiring attention from millions of diverse customers in the US and abroad. Such attention was amassed this past summer as Sabra Dipping Company made great efforts to introduce hummus to a broader public. Sabra, one of the leading dip manufacturers, took an 11 city tour across North America in which they transformed public spaces into cafés equipped with Mediterranean themed village settings and music.

The company, which saw over +50% growth in sales this past year, distributed hundreds of thousands of classic hummus samples to a mass of consumers. Wild Garden Hummus (produced by Ziyad Brothers Inc.) is another US leading manufacturer seeing a climb in their sales. Unlike competing companies, Wild Garden produces small individual servings of hummus—making it more accessible for those who like to grab healthy snacks on the go. Nassem Ziyad, General Manager, says “hummus is popularizing mainly because there is a new craze over healthy eating.”

In fact, due to the dip’s great source of fiber and protein, many high schools and universities have approached Wild Garden as part of their campaign to incorporate healthier food choices into school cafeterias. In addition to the new wave of health consciousness, Ziyad points out alternative reasons for the hummus craze, “With the economy in bad shape, consumers are becoming very picky about what they are eating—selecting more low-cost, satisfying foods.”

Also, consumers are getting bored with the average go-to American foods, and therefore have become as Ziyad puts it “increasingly open minded to trying something unique and exotic.” Ziyad also added, “for many, hummus is a springboard into trying other Arabic specialties.” Heather Nicholson of Livonia recalls her experience of first trying hummus, saying “At first I was hesitant as I thought it looked so peculiar, but I was soon hooked, and that’s what really got me interested in trying other Arabic foods like tabbouli and falafel.” Like Nicholson, millions of Americans are getting hooked on hummus, indicating we are indeed witnessing a new era. An era better known as



'the hummus revolution'.

**Want to make it yourself? Those who are feeling adventurous should try this hummus recipe:**

Ingredients:

- 1 lb Chickpeas, rinsed in a colander
- 1/2 C Tahini Paste, (sesame paste)
- 1/2 C Lemon Juice, Fresh Squeezed
- 2 tsp Salt
- 1/2 C Olive Oil
- Water, as needed to adjust consistency

Preparation:

Place chickpeas in strainer and wash well. Let dry for 10 minutes. Place chickpeas, lemon juice, salt and tahini in food processor. Begin running machine and slowly drizzle in olive oil. Adjust consistency of hummus with water to desired thickness.