



Tomato Fritters with Tzatziki

SERVINGS / MAKES ABOUT 2 DOZEN 3" FRITTERS

The island of Santorini boasts bounties of cherry tomatoes. They grow everywhere, from gardens and fields to ancient rocky ruins. Their tough skins fight the heat and wind, but their sweet and juicy interiors make them the perfect nibbles for any time of day. In Perissa, Chef Nicholas and I prepped fritters at his family-owned restaurant by combining chopped cherry tomatoes, onions, and fresh herbs. As we cooked, his young daughter curiously asked if she could assist. So, she scooped the batter while I fried them in olive oil, sprinkling each patty with flaky sea salt. We couldn't wait for the fritters to cool before taking a bite, so we discovered that a dollop of tzatziki chilled them instead.

Although fresh summer tomatoes off the vine are best, I chop and fry my supermarket cherry tomatoes all year long. Serve yours as a scrumptious side with salad or an addictive appetizer at parties. And to save time, you can prepare the batter up to one day before frying.

INGREDIENTS

1 pound cherry tomatoes, chopped	1 teaspoon salt
1 onion, finely chopped	1/2 teaspoon black pepper
1 tablespoon chopped parsley	1 cup self rising flour
1 tablespoon chopped dill	1 3/4 cup all purpose flour
2 tablespoons chopped mint	1 1/2 cup water
	1 cup olive oil

PROCESS:

Combine the flour, baking powder, and water in a large bowl. Stir in the tomatoes, onion, mint, parsley, dill, and salt and pepper and let sit for 20 minutes. (You can cover and keep in refrigerator up to 1 day before frying.)

Heat the olive oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Using a 2-inch cookie scoop, scoop up a portion of batter, then release it into the hot oil. Use the back of the scoop to gently press the fritter flat. Repeat with more batter until you have filled the skillet. Fry the fritters, turning once, until golden, about 2 minutes. Turn the fritters and cook for 2 to 3 minutes longer, until cook through. Transfer to a paper-lined plate and sprinkle with sea salt. Repeat with the remaining batter. Serve the fritters warm.



Tzatziki

makes 3 cups

I love shopping for ancient Greek coins and unique cooking tools in Athens's Monastiraki Square. And after each spree, I dine and people-watch in a shady courtyard outside a taverna. There, servers deliver sizzling platters of grilled meats and vegetables on pita beds with bowls of tzatziki, the cool yogurt sauce spiked with garlic and fresh dill or mint.

I prepare tzatziki so often that I purchased an antique green bowl to serve it at home. Although most tzatziki recipes are virtually the same, I like to spice mine up with a kick of green chile. The versatility of this sauce makes it a flawless topping for pita, and a fantastic dip for tomato fritters (page 164), raw vegetables, and meat kebabs.

1 cucumber, peeled, seeded, and grated 2 cloves garlic, minced

1/2 teaspoon minced green chile

2 cups whole milk Greek yogurt

2 tablespoons lemon juice

1 tablespoon chopped fresh dill

1 teaspoon kosher salt

2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

Squeeze the grated cucumber with your hands to release as much water as possible. Wrap paper towels around the cucumbers and continue to squeeze.

In a medium bowl, combine the cucumber, garlic, chile, yogurt, lemon juice, dill, and salt. Stir well. Cover and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes, or up to 2 days. Taste to see if more salt is needed, then drizzle with olive oil and serve.