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## Crispy, fluffy air-fried falafel perfect for New Year's resolutions

By Susie Iventosch



Air Fryer Falafel Photo Susie Iventosch

We love falafel, but since most falafel is fried in oil, we have rarely eaten it . until now! That's where the magic of the air fryer comes in. It's a game changer in my opinion, because it doesn't need all of that extra oil to make the falafel crispy. We are so happy, because the garbanzo beans, fresh herbs, garlic, shallots, cumin and all of those great flavors are so hard to resist and they are healthy, too. While you can certainly bake falafel in the oven, the air fryer produces a crispier outside and a soft and fluffy inside to the falafel. Now we eat it way more often. Plus all of the great breads and sauces to eat with falafel are amazing, like naan or pita, whipped feta, tzatziki, Greek olives . I could go on. Those Mediterranean flavors pretty much make my taste buds flutter!

This recipe calls for a lot of fresh parsley and cilantro, which gives it a super fresh taste and a beautiful green tint on the inside, and seltzer water

added to the mixture provides an extra bit of crispiness on the edges. Where most recipes call for using soaked and ground raw garbanzo beans (chickpeas), this recipe uses canned beans, but we roast them to dry them out a bit before processing them with the rest of the ingredients. This speeds up the process and tastes really delicious. And, finally, we add just a bit of baking powder to the mixture, which also helps to keep the inside light and fluffy.

If you would like to make whipped feta to go with your falafel, simply beat 1 cup of crumbled feta and 1-2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil together until the cheese is mostly creamy. Then whip in about a half cup of plain nonfat yogurt and one tablespoon fresh lemon juice until fluffy. That's it. So simple and soooooo good!

### Air Fryer Falafel

(Makes 10 2-inch falafel balls)

#### INGREDIENTS

2 16-ounce cans garbanzo beans, rinsed, drained, and roasted  
 1/2 cup (packed) fresh parsley leaves  
 1/2 cup (packed) fresh cilantro leaves  
 2 small shallots, coarsely chopped (or 1 large shallot)  
 2 large cloves garlic, minced  
 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice  
 2 teaspoons cumin  
 1 teaspoon salt  
 1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper  
 1 teaspoon baking powder  
 1 tablespoon olive oil  
 1 tablespoon flour (can use regular all-purpose or any gluten-free flour)  
 2 +/- tablespoons seltzer water

#### DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 350 F. Spray a baking sheet with cooking spray.

Drain garbanzo beans and rinse them in cold water. Drain water off and spread them out on the prepared baking sheet. Bake for about 10-15 minutes or just until dried and starting to brown. Remove from oven and cool.

Place garbanzo beans, parsley, cilantro, shallots, garlic, lemon juice, cumin, salt, pepper and baking powder into the bowl of your food processor. Pulse until evenly mixed and small, fine pieces of garbanzo remain and mixture sticks together when you press it together. You don't want it too finely puréed, but just enough to hold together.

Turn the mixture out into a bowl and mix in flour and seltzer water. Now, the mixture should be able to hold its shape when formed into balls. Add more seltzer if needed for it to be able to form balls. Divide batter into 10 balls, approximately 2-inches in diameter.

At this point, you can freeze the falafel in an airtight container, or refrigerate for several hours until you're ready to bake them in the air fryer.

To cook, preheat the air fryer on the "air fry" mode to 350 F. When it says to add food, place the falafel balls on the tray and air fry for about 12 minutes or until the edges are crispy and the centers are hot.

Serve hot with pita or naan, whipped feta, hummus, tzatziki or even on a Greek salad.



Susie can be reached at [suziventosch@gmail.com](mailto:suziventosch@gmail.com). This recipe can be found on our website: [www.lamorindaweekly.com](http://www.lamorindaweekly.com). If you would like to share your favorite recipe with Susie please contact her by email or call our office at (925) 377-0977. Or visit <https://treksandbites.com>

Reach the reporter at: [suziven@gmail.com](mailto:suziven@gmail.com)

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