

Zucchini-Lentil Fritters with Lemony Yogurt

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4.6 stars, 186 reviews

Bon appetit recipe

These crispy, crackly zucchini fritters take inspiration from the traditional Bengali onion snacks piyaju. Soaked and blended red lentils make up the batter, which is spiked with turmeric and chili powder.

Ingredients

LEMONY YOGURT

¾ cup whole-milk yogurt

2 Tbsp. fresh lemon juice

½ tsp. sugar

Kosher salt

FRITTERS

1 cup red lentils (masoor dal)

1 medium zucchini (about 5 oz.)

½ medium onion, thinly sliced

1 ¾ tsp. kosher salt, divided, plus more

½ tsp. Kashmiri chile powder or ¼ tsp. cayenne pepper

¼ tsp. ground turmeric

1 cup parsley leaves with tender stems

1 Tbsp. finely grated lemon zest

1 cup ghee or neutral vegetable oil

Preparation

LEMONY YOGURT

Step 1

Whisk yogurt, lemon juice, and sugar in a small bowl to combine. Season with salt and whisk again to combine.

Step 2

Do Ahead: Yogurt can be made 1 day ahead. Cover and chill.

FRITTERS

Step 3

Rinse lentils, then soak in 2 cups water at room temperature at least 1 hour and up to 12. Soaking the lentils for this long will make them super-plump and tender, which in turn makes them a lot easier to blend.

Step 4

Meanwhile, trim ends of zucchini and cut crosswise into 3 pieces about 2" long. Cut each piece lengthwise into ¼"-thick planks. Stack a few planks and slice lengthwise into ¼"-thick matchsticks (about the size of a skinny french fry). Transfer zucchini to a colander set in a medium bowl. Add onion and 1 tsp. salt to colander and toss to combine. Let zucchini and onion sit until about 1 Tbsp. liquid has released and the vegetables look wilted and soft, 30 minutes–2 hours (to maximize your downtime, do this while the lentils are soaking). Gently pat dry with paper towels to remove any excess moisture. The less moisture in the veggies, the less soggy your fritters will be, so be sure not to skip this step.

Step 5

Drain lentils and transfer to a food processor. Add chile powder, turmeric, and $\frac{3}{4}$ tsp. salt. Pulse, scraping down sides, until a purée forms. Transfer to a medium bowl and add zucchini and onion mixture, parsley, and lemon zest. Toss well with a rubber spatula to combine (it will look like too much vegetables for the lentils, but that's just what you want).

Step 6

Heat ghee in a 10" cast-iron skillet over medium-high until a small amount of batter added to the fat excitedly sizzles and sputters. Carefully drop $\frac{1}{4}$ cup batter into ghee, then flatten to a pancake with the back of a large metal spoon dipped into the hot ghee to prevent sticking. Repeat 3 times for a total of 4 fritters. Fry until deep golden brown on one side (look for the color of a well-fried falafel), about 3 minutes. Turn with a slotted spatula or large spoon and continue to fry until deep golden brown on the second side, about 3 minutes more. Transfer fritters to a wire rack set in a paper towel-lined baking sheet to drain. Season immediately with salt. Repeat with remaining batter (you should have 8–10 fritters).

Step 7

Transfer fritters to a platter. Serve hot with lemony yogurt alongside.