



Skinny Dipping

Spruce up your party platter with these delicious, good-for-you dips. BY ELLIE KRIEGER



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DURING MY TRAVELS, I've picked up dip ideas and recipes as varied as the stamps on my passport. In Morocco, I tasted how richly flavored hummus can be. In Greece, I discovered creamy, garlicky tzatziki. In Mexico, I sampled dozens of flavorful salsas. Besides being intriguing and delicious, these dips—and others from the Middle East, the Mediterranean, and Central America—are much better for you than the sour cream and cream cheese dips typically found on the party circuit here. That's because they use healthful vegetables, beans, nuts, and seeds as their base ingredients.

From the global perspective, hummus and guacamole are the most common examples, but

there are worlds to explore beyond those. Smoky roasted eggplant and tahini (sesame paste) make baba ghanoush, and sweet roasted red peppers and almonds form a classic romesco. There are as many varieties of bean dip as there are national flags.

These global dips not only contain less saturated fat than those made with sour cream or cream cheese, but their vegetables, nuts, beans, and seeds add lots of nutrients: for example, vitamins C and A in red peppers and tomatoes; healthy fat in avocado, nuts, and seeds; and protein, minerals, and B vitamins in beans. What's more, all of these ingredients are rich in fiber and antioxidants.

In these dip recipes, avocados, beans, and red peppers take center stage. The Green Goddess Dip uses avocado as a foundation for fresh herbs and has just the right amount of vinegar and buttermilk. Beans provide creaminess in the Chipotle Black Bean Dip, which has a smoky, spicy kick. And in the Roasted Red Pepper and Feta Dip, charred peppers make a velvety base for Mediterranean flavors. Together, they make a deliciously healthy party platter.



Photographs by Scott Phillips, except head shot by Christopher Hirsheimer; food styling by Samantha Seneviratne

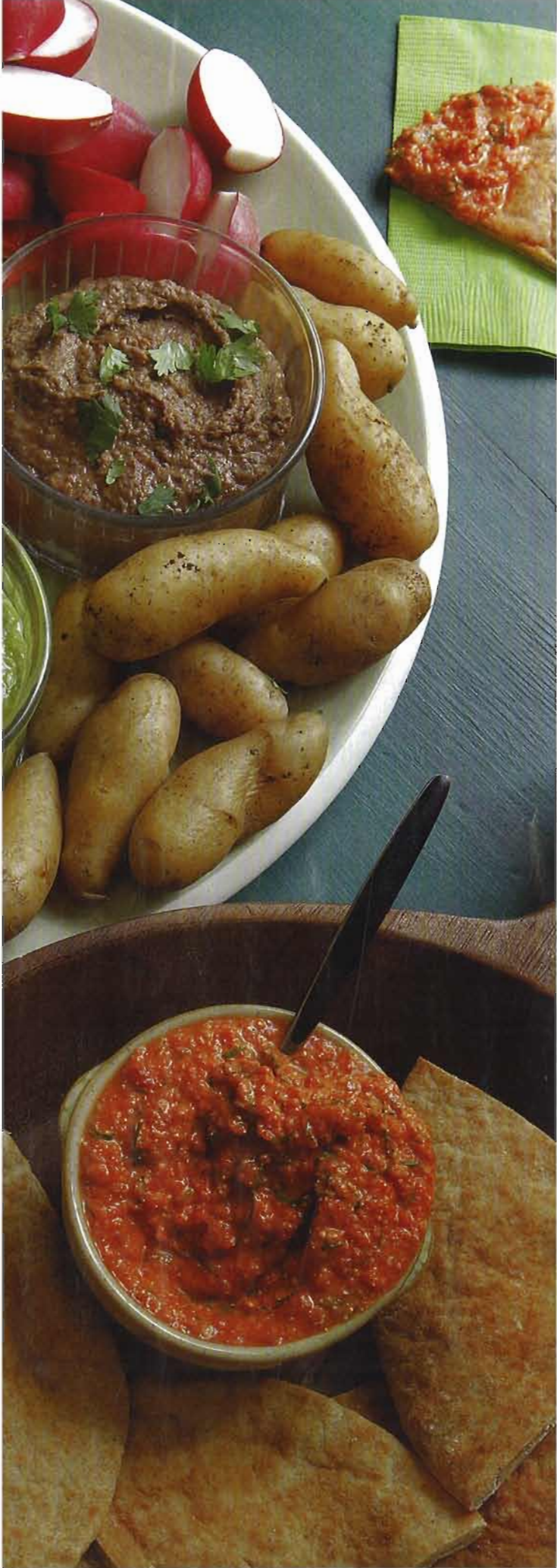
Good to Know

I like potato chips and fried tortilla chips as much as the next person, but there are many inspired options that are just as delicious and better for you. Try these for dippers:

- Whole-grain pita wedges or crunchy baked whole-grain pita chips.
- Toasted baguette slices brushed with olive oil and rubbed with garlic.
- Vegetables, including grape tomatoes, sliced red and green peppers, radishes, endive, blanched asparagus or green beans, and steamed fingerling potatoes.
- Fresh-baked corn tortilla chips.



Find a recipe for baked pita chips at FineCooking.com/extras.



roasted red pepper and feta dip

Yields about 2 cups; serves 8

- 3 medium red bell peppers
- 1 medium clove garlic
- Fine sea salt
- ½ cup crumbled feta (about 3 oz.)
- 2 Tbs. plain dry breadcrumbs
- 2 Tbs. fresh lemon juice
- 2 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil
- 3 Tbs. chopped fresh dill

Position a rack 5 to 6 inches from the broiler element and heat the broiler on high. Put the peppers on a heavy-duty rimmed baking sheet and broil, turning every 5 minutes, until the

skin is charred all around and the peppers have softened, about 20 minutes. Put the peppers in a large bowl, cover tightly with plastic wrap, and let sit until cool enough to handle. Remove the skins, seeds, and stems.

Peel and mince the garlic clove.

With the side of a chef's knife, mash the garlic and ¼ tsp. salt together to form a paste.

Put the peppers, feta, breadcrumbs, lemon juice, and olive oil in a food processor and process until smooth. Transfer to a bowl and stir in the garlic paste and dill. Season to taste with salt and serve.

chipotle black bean dip

Yields about 1½ cups; serves 6

- 2 Tbs. olive oil
- ½ medium yellow onion, diced (½ cup)
- 1 medium clove garlic, minced
- ¼ tsp. ground cumin
- ¼ tsp. ground coriander
- 1 15½-oz. can black beans (preferably low-sodium), drained and rinsed
- 2 Tbs. coarsely chopped fresh cilantro; more for garnish
- 1½ Tbs. fresh lime juice
- 2 tsp. seeded, minced chipotle chile (from a can of chipotles in adobo; see Test Kitchen, p. 87)
- Fine sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

Heat 1 Tbs. of the oil in a medium skillet over medium heat.

Add the onion and cook until softened, about 3 minutes.

Stir in the garlic, cumin, and coriander and cook for 30 seconds more. Set aside to cool slightly.

Put the onion mixture, beans, cilantro, lime juice, chipotle, ¼ tsp. salt, ½ tsp. pepper, the remaining 1 Tbs. oil, and 1 Tbs. water in a food processor. Process until smooth. Transfer to a serving bowl, garnish with more chopped cilantro, and serve.



avocado green goddess dip

Yields about 1½ cups; serves 6

- 1 medium ripe avocado, pitted and peeled
- 2 scallions (both green and white parts), thinly sliced
- ½ cup buttermilk
- ¼ cup fresh tarragon
- ¼ cup fresh flat-leaf parsley
- 2 Tbs. sliced fresh chives
- 2 Tbs. white wine vinegar

Fine sea salt and freshly ground white pepper

Put all of the ingredients in a food processor and process until smooth. Transfer to a bowl, season to taste with salt and pepper, and serve.

Registered dietitian Ellie Krieger is a Fine Cooking contributing editor.



Make ahead

All of these dips can be made up to three days ahead and refrigerated in an airtight container.