

Ful Medames

Ful Medames is the national dish of Egypt. According to an Arab saying, “Beans have satisfied even the Pharaohs.” The recipe most likely dates to the Dynastic Period (3000–1000 BCE).

Ingredients

- 2 cups dried fava beans
- Salt
- 1/3 cup chopped flat-leaf parsley
- Extra-virgin olive oil
- 3 lemons, quartered
- Salt and pepper
- 4–6 cloves garlic, crushed
- Chili-pepper flakes
- Ground cumin

Instructions

1. Soak beans overnight and leave unpeeled.
2. Add beans to large saucepan and add enough water to cover.
3. Simmer the beans with pan lid on until tender (approx. 2–2 1/2 hrs), adding water when needed to keep them covered.
4. Salt to taste.
5. When the beans are soft, let the liquid reduce.
6. Take out a ladle or two of the beans and mash them with some of the cooking liquid. Stir this back into the beans to thicken.
7. Serve the beans in soup bowls sprinkled with chopped parsley.
8. Top the beans with the dressing ingredients: extra-virgin olive oil, quartered lemons, salt and pepper, crushed garlic, chili-pepper flakes, and ground cumin.

Adapted from *The New Book of Middle Eastern Food*,
by Claudia Roden (Knopf, 2000).