

Olive's Kitchen

Harissa - Hot, hot, hot!

Harissa is a hot chilli paste widely used in the cuisines of Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia. There are numerous versions. This one is based on a recipe from Marieke Brugman, formerly of Howquadale Gourmet Retreat, Victoria. It has an extraordinary flavour but it is very hot. Only tiny amounts - about a quarter of a teaspoon - should be taken at any one time. It is also quite – but deliciously – garlicky. Be careful to wear rubber gloves when chopping up the chillies. The harissa will last in the refrigerator for quite some time with care; or freeze some in small containers. Serve it with non-traditional dishes too: even with poached eggs.

For 300 ml:

- 1 tbsp coriander seeds
- ½ tbsp cumin seeds
- ½ tbsp caraway seeds
- several leaves fresh mint
- 250 g red chillies, stemmed and deseeded
- 1 knob (head) of garlic*, each clove peeled
- 1 medium bunch fresh coriander, no roots, washed and dried
- 1 tsp salt
- 2 tbsps olive oil



**Use less garlic if desired.*

Method:

Dry roast the seeds first if you wish, then crush, for example, in a mortar and pestle or with a food processor or strong stick blender.

Add these and remaining ingredients except the oil to a food processor, or use the stick blender, and blend for a minute or two. Add oil and blend to make a fairly smooth paste.

Pack into sterilised jars. Cover with a little olive oil and store in refrigerator. Makes up to 300ml.

Serve:

Serve a small amount in a bowl for guests to take as desired.

Equipment:

Mortar and pestle, food processor or strong stick blender.

Difficulty and Time:

Not difficult (2/5). 20 minutes.

Notes and variations:

For a short cut and variations, use the main method as above but:

- Use less garlic. Use green chillies as well. Or use bought crushed chilli.
- As well as, or instead of, coriander and mint try parsley or basil.
- For a red tinge and a different flavour, add 2 to 3 tablespoons of tomato paste.