



Group. Alton Local Food Initiative

Web www.altonlocalfood.org.uk

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Aubergine Celebration: From ALFI's Plot to the Plate!

Aubergines, also known as eggplants, are a warm-weather favourite that thrive in sunny, temperate climates. With ideal temperatures ranging between 21°C and 29°C (70°F–85°F), these plants require 6–8 hours of direct sunlight daily to flourish. In the UK, this often means growing aubergines undercover in a greenhouse or polytunnel to ensure a successful crop.

For the best results, plant aubergines in well-drained, fertile soil enriched with organic matter. Consistent moisture is essential—keep the soil evenly moist but not waterlogged, especially during fruiting, to prevent drought stress. Adding mulch around the plants helps retain moisture and regulate soil temperature, creating the perfect environment for growth.

This summer, ALFI was thrilled to receive seedling donations from the Selborne Plants Fair, including an aubergine plant. Planted in the Station Plot, it thrived in the warm weather, producing an impressive six fruits.

To celebrate this success, we're sharing a recipe for the classic Middle Eastern dip, Baba Ganoush. Read on to discover the history of this smoky, creamy dish and learn how to make it yourself.

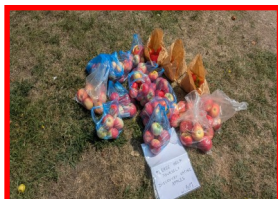


Discover the magic of Baba Ganoush.

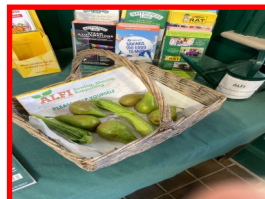
Baba Ganoush is a creamy, smoky, and irresistibly delicious dip that has been enjoyed for centuries. Originating from the Levant region, this dish is a celebration of simple ingredients—roasted aubergine, garlic, lemon (all grown by ALFI at its plots this season!) and tahini—transformed into a velvety masterpiece. Its name, which loosely translates to "pampered father," hints at the indulgent nature of this dish, which is perfect as a dip, spread, or side. **[Recipe overleaf](#)** ➡

Some of the produce from the plots

Magnificent apple crop at Jubilee Field



Fruit & Veg at the Station Plot



Assorted apples at Vicarage Plot



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Community Gardens Working Parties

St Lawrence Vicarage Sundays

10.30—12.30

October 26th

Station Plot and BT are now sharing :

Sundays 10.30—12.30—Station

11.30—12.30 - BT

October 12th

Don't forget the Harvest Feast on Saturday 11th

October. Help us celebrate with cakes and a

variety of homemade soup



Baba Ganoush Dip

Ingredients

- 2 large aubergines (about 2 pounds total)
 - 3 tablespoons tahini (sesame paste)
 - 2–3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice (adjust to taste)
 - 2 cloves garlic, minced or grated
 - 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil (plus more for garnish)
 - 1 teaspoon ground cumin
 - ½ teaspoon smoked paprika (optional, for extra smokiness)
 - Salt, to taste
- Fresh parsley, chopped (for garnish)

Roast the Aubergine

- Preheat your oven to 425°F (220°C).
- Prick the aubergine a few times with a fork to allow steam to escape.
- Place the aubergine on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper or foil.
- Roast for 40–50 minutes, turning occasionally, until the skin is charred and the flesh is soft. Alternatively, for a more authentic smoky flavour, you can char the aubergines directly over a gas flame or grill.

○ Cool and Peel

- Remove the aubergines from the oven and let them cool for 10–15 minutes.
- Once cool enough to handle, peel off the charred skin. Discard the skin and place the soft flesh in a colander to drain excess liquid for about 10 minutes. This step helps prevent the dip from becoming watery.

○ Blend the Ingredients

- Transfer the drained aubergine flesh to a mixing bowl or food processor.
- Add tahini, lemon juice, garlic, olive oil, cumin, smoked paprika (if using), and a pinch of salt.
- Mash with a fork or blend until smooth, depending on your preferred texture. Taste and adjust seasoning, adding more lemon juice, salt, or tahini as needed.

○ Serve

- Transfer the Baba Ganoush to a serving bowl.
- Drizzle with olive oil and garnish with chopped parsley or a sprinkle of smoked paprika.

○ Enjoy

Serve with warm pitta bread and fresh vegetables (like cucumber, carrots, or bell peppers), or as part of a mezze platter.



SOIL HEALTH WORD SEARCH



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