

Egyptian *Ta'amia*
(Fava bean croquettes)

This traditional dish was a great favorite among the ancient Egyptians, who used fava beans to make their version of falafel. Fava beans were more readily available in ancient Egypt, while chickpeas, more commonly used in modern falafel, were more readily available in ancient Persia. Modern Egyptians add black pepper and Tabasco sauce to the mixture to spice it up.

Ingredients

2 cups (1 lb.) dried broad beans
3 large onions
4 large garlic cloves
½ tsp. baking powder **or** baking soda
1 Tbs. ground coriander
2 tsp. cumin
1 tsp. salt
sesame seeds **or** poppy seeds
oil for frying
piece of flat bread

Utensils

knife and cutting board
measuring cup
measuring spoons
cookpot
food processor
deep frying pan
3 plates
paper towels
slotted spoon
strainer
serving plate

Peel and chop the onions. Peel the garlic. Place the sesame or poppy seeds onto a plate. Cover another larger plate with paper towels. Place the beans in a cookpot and cover them with water.

Soak the beans for at least 24 hours, then drain them in a strainer. Pop the beans out of their skins. Place the beans, onions, garlic, spices, and salt into the food processor. Process into a smooth paste. Let the purée rest for at least 30 minutes. The dish can be prepared up to this point in advance. Form the purée into flat cakes 1 to 1 ½-inches in diameter or into balls the size of walnuts. Coat the *ta'amia* in the seeds, and place them onto a plate. Heat oil in a deep frying pan on the stove over medium high heat. When a piece of flat bread dropped into the oil turns brown in 1 minute, then the oil is hot enough to use. Using a slotted spoon, gently lower the *ta'amia* into the hot oil. Cook for 2 to 3 minutes until they are brown all over. Using a slotted spoon, remove them from the oil and place them onto the paper towel-covered plate to drain off the excess oil. Serve hot or cold, but they are best hot. If serving them cold, they can be made in advance of the meal.