

CRISP SEEDED MEGA-CRACKERS

8 LARGE CRACKERS

We truly believe that if the four food groups consisted of chips, dips, crackers, and cheese, many people could die happy. From good old sour cream onion dip and rippled chips to a luscious St. André triple-crème cheese spread on a crostini, the combination of salty and savory and creamy and crisp is unbeatable. The following recipe makes snapping-crisp, saucer-size crackers that look lovely presented in a bread basket. (You can easily swap other small seeds for the sesame seeds.) We thank author Lora Brody, a fellow snack lover, for the inspiration behind these crackers.

3 cups (360g) unbleached all-purpose flour

1¼ teaspoons salt

½ teaspoon baking powder

½ cup (95g) toasted sesame seeds

1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

2 tablespoons (21g) olive oil

1 cup (224g) water, cool

In a medium bowl, whisk together the flour, salt, baking powder, seeds, and pepper. Stir in the olive oil, mixing thoroughly, then add the water, tossing with a fork until the dough becomes cohesive. Turn out the dough onto a lightly floured surface and knead and turn it over a few times to smooth it out. Divide the dough into eight pieces and allow them to rest, covered, for 15 minutes.

Preheat the oven to 450°F. If you have a baking stone, be sure to use it; it will make the crispest crackers.

Roll one or two pieces of dough (as many as will fit on your baking stone at once) as thin as possible; you'll make rounds 8" to 9" across. Using a peel or giant spatula, transfer the rounds to the stone and bake them for about 4 minutes, then flip them over and bake about 2 minutes on the second side, until they're golden brown on both sides.

If you don't have a baking stone, bake these on a lightly greased or parchment-lined baking sheet set on the middle rack of your oven; they'll take about 6 minutes on the first side, 4 minutes on the second. Remove the crackers from the oven as soon as they're brown and transfer them to a rack to cool. Repeat with the remaining dough rounds. Store crackers airtight.

NUTRITION INFORMATION PER SERVING: 1 cracker, 77g

254 cal | 9g fat | 7g protein | 36g complex carbohydrates | 0g sugar | 3g dietary fiber | 0mg cholesterol | 365mg sodium