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Kalamata Olive Tapenade

Makes about 6 cups

A jar of fresh tapenade is a delicious hostess gift, or a gift for your sugar-free, gluten-free, or just hungry friends! It's such a versatile mix – use it as a spread on crostini, add a spoonful to salad dressings, serve it as a dip for crudité's, top a freshly-grilled steak, or toss a dollop with roasted vegetables. Any one of these uses will make the dish delicious. (Recipe is easily halved, if desired.)

Ingredients:

4 cups Kalamata olives, pitted
4 cups green olives, pimento-filled
3 clove of garlic, grated
6 tablespoons capers
1 teaspoon dried basil
1 teaspoon red pepper flakes
1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
2 tablespoons lemon juice
4 tablespoons olive oil

Directions:

- (1) Drain the olives well, toss and turn until the brine has drained.
- (2) Meanwhile, grate the garlic cloves using a fine zester.
- (3) Place in the bowl of a food processor, the olives, grated garlic, capers, basil, red pepper flakes, black pepper, lemon juice, and olive oil. Pulse 2-3 times, scrape down the sides, and pulse again. Repeat until the mixture is finely chopped, but not pureed. Transfer from the food processor into a medium bowl.
- (4) Place the tapenade into half-pint jars for giving, and refrigerate for up to two weeks. Or, if serving as an appetizer, halve the recipe. Pair with goat cheese and crackers or crostini. Garnish with parsley and pimentos.