

- Prep Time: 10 minutes
- Cook/Toast Time: 5 minutes
- Total Time: 15 minutes
- Yield: Approx. $\frac{3}{4}$ cup spice blend (12 servings)
- Heat Intensity: Mild to Zero (Aromatic & Tangy)
- Skill Intensity Level: Easy / Beginner

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Equipment Needed

- Dry skillet or frying pan (preferably cast iron or heavy stainless steel)
- Spice grinder or mortar and pestle (optional, for whole seeds)
- Small mixing bowl
- Airtight glass storage jar

Ingredients

For the Spice Blend (Za'atar Mix)

- Unhulled Raw Sesame Seeds: 3 tablespoons
- Ground Sumac: 2 tablespoons (provides the signature citrusy tang)
- Dried Thyme: 2 tablespoons (rubbed or finely crushed)
- Dried Wild Oregano: 1 tablespoon
- Dried Marjoram: 1 tablespoon

- Ground Cumin: 1 teaspoon (toasted and freshly ground preferred)
- Coarse Sea Salt or Flaky Salt: 1 teaspoon (adjust to taste)

For Serving (Traditional Dip)

- Extra Virgin Olive Oil: $\frac{1}{2}$ cup (high quality, cold-pressed)
- Pita or Flatbread: Warm, fresh pita bread or naan for dipping

Step-by-Step Instructions

1. Toast the Sesame Seeds: Medium Heat | 3-5 Minutes | High Attention Required.

Place a dry skillet over medium heat. Add the raw sesame seeds to the pan without any oil. Toast the seeds, stirring constantly with a wooden spoon or tossing the pan frequently to prevent burning. Watch closely as they turn light golden brown and release a fragrant, nutty aroma (about 3 to 5 minutes). Immediately transfer the toasted seeds to a plate to stop the cooking process and allow them to cool completely.

2. Grind and Activate the Herbs: Low Intensity | 2 Minutes.

In a mortar and pestle or spice grinder, briefly crush the dried thyme, oregano, and marjoram. You do not want a fine powder; a gentle pulse or crush releases essential oils while maintaining a rustic texture.

3. Combine the Blend: Low Intensity | 2 Minutes.

In a clean, dry mixing bowl, combine the crushed herb mixture, ground sumac, ground cumin,

coarse sea salt, and cooled toasted sesame seeds. Stir thoroughly with a spoon until all spices, seeds, and herbs are evenly distributed.

4. Store and Preserve: Storage Phase.

Transfer the spice mixture into a clean, dry glass jar with an airtight seal. Label the jar with the date.

Serving Methods & Pairings

1. Classic Olive Oil Dip: Pour $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of extra virgin olive oil into a shallow dipping bowl. Sprinkle 2 tablespoons of za'atar blend on top. Dip warm pita bread into the oil and spice mix.
2. Man'oushe (Za'atar Flatbread): Mix za'atar with olive oil to form a paste. Spread evenly over raw dough and bake at 220°C (425°F) for 8–10 minutes until golden and bubbly.
3. Breakfast Topping: Sprinkle over labneh, thick Greek yogurt, fried eggs, or sliced fresh tomatoes and cucumbers.
4. Proteins & Veggie Rub: Rub over chicken, fish, or lamb prior to roasting. Toss with chickpeas, cauliflower, or potatoes before air-frying or baking.

Shelf Life & Storage Instructions

- Shelf Life: Up to 3 to 6 months stored in a cool, dark pantry.

- **Preservation Note:** Because sesame seeds contain natural oils, they can spoil over time. Keep the jar away from heat sources and direct sunlight. To extend freshness up to 1 year, store the airtight jar in the refrigerator.

Nutritional Profile

The following nutrition values are calculated per serving size of the dry spice mix (approx. 1 tablespoon / 10g).

Nutrient	Amount Per Serving	% Daily Value
Calories	35 kcal	—
Total Fat	2.5 g	3%
Saturated Fat	0.3 g	1%
Polyunsaturated Fat	1.1 g	—
Monounsaturated Fat	1.0 g	—
Sodium	190 mg	8%
Total Carbohydrates	2.5 g	1%
Dietary Fiber	1.2 g	4%
Sugars	0.2 g	—
Protein	1.2 g	2%
Calcium	65 mg	5%
Iron	1.4 mg	8%