

# Spice up snack time with festive lemon hummus

By Susie Iventosch



Lemon hummus

Photos Susie Iventosch

Hummus is such a wholesome, nutritious, and delicious snack, and there are so many amazing ways to prepare it! You can add herbs and different spices, or you can make it with jalapeño peppers, red peppers, or even with various kinds of beans. You can add nuts or olives or simply use your imagination to produce your own concoctions. Serve it with pita bread or chips, raw veggies, or spoon it onto your plate as a condiment to other dishes you plan to serve.

Our friend and fellow food blogger Lee, of The Rogue Brussel Sprout, makes a ton of different hummus recipes, and they always

look so beautiful in her photos! Her culinary creations blend the line between food and art, as she pays meticulous attention to detail and a harmonious balance of flavors, textures, and colors. They are truly edible masterpieces!

Recently she turned us on to her Loaded Lemon Hummus and we made it for a dinner party to great fanfare! She uses lots of lemon and she sometimes adds a ranch herb blend. But the key to her hummus is the use of lemon zest, which makes it super fresh and lemony. Then, she garnishes the top of the hummus with a variety of micro greens, sliced veggies, and nuts.

It makes a gorgeous presentation. When we made ours, we used cherry tomatoes, micro arugula, Kalamata olives, cucumbers, and banana peppers on top. It's a fancy and festive party dip.

The nice thing about hummus is that the recipes are very flexible. So, if you love tahini, you can add more tahini, and

if you love salt, you can add more salt, and if you're a big garlic fan, add just a little more garlic! The one thing we always strive for is very creamy puree of the garbanzo beans and a balance of flavors. I find that adding a little ice-cold water as you puree the garbanzo beans helps to make it smooth. Just add a little at a time be-

cause you do not want it to get too watered down. Some people swear by the Vitamix blender or the the Ninja, but we just use our mini food processor, and it does the job just fine. I usually need to blend the garbanzo beans in batches, but it still works great.

To make the little canals in the hummus that hold the olive oil,

simply use the back of a spoon starting at the outside of the bowl and make a swirly pattern towards the center. You can dip the spoon in water first to make it glide more easily through the hummus in your serving bowl. Then decorate away with garnishes of your choosing.

Please visit The Rogue Brussel Sprout for her Loaded Lemon Hummus and more of her recipes: [www.theroguebrusselsprout.com/recipes/loaded-lemon-hummus#recipe-card](http://www.theroguebrusselsprout.com/recipes/loaded-lemon-hummus#recipe-card) Treks & Bites Ranch Revolution herb blend is now available at Diablo Foods in Lafayette.

## Festive Lemon Hummus

### INGREDIENTS

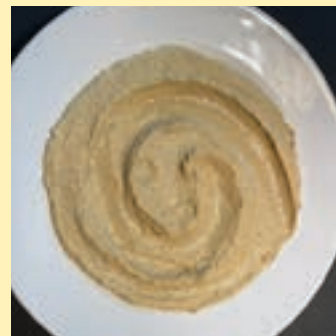
- 2-3 tbsp. tahini
- 2 15-oz. cans chickpeas (garbanzo beans)
- 1/4 cup ice cold water (more or less as needed)
- 1-2 tbsp. lemon juice
- 1 tsp. fresh lemon zest
- 2-3 cloves garlic
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1/2 tsp. lemon pepper
- 1 tsp. ranch herb blend
- 2 tbsp. olive oil
- Garnishes: extra olive oil, micro arugula, cherry tomatoes, Kalamata olives, banana peppers, cucumber

### DIRECTIONS

Place tahini in the bowl of your food processor and process for about one minute. Add garbanzo beans, a little at a time, and continue to process until smooth. Add a little bit of water as needed. If you need to do this in batches, you can remove the pureed beans and place them in a separate bowl until you have finished; then add them all back to the processor before adding the garlic, lemon juice, lemon zest, spices, and olive oil. Blend all together until very smooth.

Remove the hummus to a serving bowl. Smooth the top with a spoon or rubber spatula. Using the back of a spoon, make a swirling pattern from the outside of the bowl towards the center. Cover and refrigerate until ready to serve.

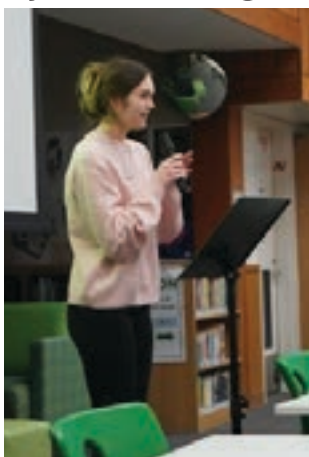
When you are ready to serve, drizzle extra olive oil into the well you made with the spoon and arrange the garnishes on the remaining part of the hummus. Serve with pita bread, chips, or crudites.



Susie can be reached at [suziventosch@gmail.com](mailto:suziventosch@gmail.com). This recipe can be found on our website: [www.lamorindaweekly.com](http://www.lamorindaweekly.com) If you would like to share your favorite recipe with Susie please contact her by email or call our office at (925) 377-0977. Or visit <https://treksandbites.com>

# Miramonte and Campolindo Open Mic sparks connection among teen poets

By Emma Wong



Miramonte sophomore Elise Vansant speaks from her poem, "Oftentimes."

"Next up," calls Campolindo senior Laurel Tringe, "reading his slam poetry piece about hip-hop... Vinny Yu!" It's 6 p.m. at the Miramonte library. Sophomore Yu steps onstage. Taps the mic. Takes a breath—and launches into his performance, a riveting blend of rhythm and rhyme. On Friday, March 1, Miramonte and Campolindo's writing clubs hosted their first joint Open Mic, spotlighting teen voices and celebrat-

ing the joys of creative writing. The mic also announced winners of the Miramonte-Campolindo writing contest.

Two years ago, Tringe—president of Campolindo's Poetry and Creative Writing Club (PAC)—began messaging over social media with Emma Wong, Miramonte junior and leader of its Writer's Magazine club. The two decided to host a cross-school writing contest followed by the Open Mic, where winners of the contest would be announced and gifts awarded.

"We planned to hold the mic last year but never made a concrete plan: this year, we were able to organize with a bigger group," Tringe said.

Several staff joined the planning effort, including Miramonte juniors Aya Minn and Olivia Shin, sophomore Kaia Bonham, and Campolindo sophomore Lauren Kawamoto. The writing contest welcomed submissions from every genre, including

poetry, short story, and essay. PAC and Writer's Magazine staff hung up posters around campus and reached out to English teachers, requesting them to judge submissions.

Miramonte instructor Amy Krochmal volunteered as one of four judges. "I was so excited to participate," Krochmal said. "It's an honor, because students often shy away from sharing personal writing with teachers."

In late February, contest submissions closed and Open Mic preparation began. Running a tight schedule, staff secured a wireless mic stand from Miramonte's theater and designed custom T-shirts for contest winners. Meanwhile, contest judges reviewed students' work for a total of 20 submissions.

Olivia Shin is Writer's Magazine's design coordinator, who assisted with publicity leading up to the event. "We did a lot of Zoom and FaceTime calls," Shin

said. "We organized tasks, like advertising and shirt designing, on a Google Doc, where our opening speech was also written."

March 1 proved a challenging date. Rain poured in torrents; as staff arrived with tables and pizza, the library's awning provided a safe haven from the storm. With a swim meet running parallel, some student-athletes could not guarantee their attendance.

Despite initial roadblocks, the staff persevered. In the library, a projector displayed quotes from contest submissions and headshots of their authors. Quiet music filled the room while attendees poured in.

Anyone could volunteer to read a two-minute excerpt of a creative work. Miramonte junior Catherine Hu was first in line, reading her poem "ABACADABA," a poem on the theme of magic.

"My agreeing to be the first speaker was a decision I made on impulse—so, initially, I was



Photos Ava Skidgel

Open Mic participants, including Elizabeth Perlman (right), clap after a speaking performance.

a bit intimidated," Hu said. "However, the positive atmosphere of the event made it a lot less stressful."

A total of 12 speakers read aloud, including Campolindo sophomore Isabelle Culinco, who read from her meditative piece "Sometimes."

"I found out about the Open Mic in our school's weekly emails," Culinco said. "I wanted to share my poem with others who would appreciate it in a different way than those who didn't write poetry."

Speakers performed their poems, stories, and essays in a variety of ways. Sophomore Yu, drawing from his experi-

ence in public speaking, ran through his slam piece about the birth of hip-hop. Senior Mika Strickler performed her poem, "Reasons for Driving Dangerously on Return Home," in a lilting, near-humorous tone, articulating her thoughts via hand gestures. Junior Aerin Haro utilized her storytelling ability to read an excerpt from a longer piece, "Does True Love Exist?"

Subject matter played a key role in the delivery of each piece: some were science-fiction scenes brimming with action, while others were tender meditations on family relations.

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# Standardized test-optional and blind policies - When should you submit your scores

By Elizabeth LaScala, PhD

The COVID-19 pandemic brought on numerous changes within the standardized testing industry, many colleges shifting to a test-optional admissions process for the 2020-21 admissions cycle. Fast forward a few years and now nearly 1900 colleges and universities in the U.S. extended their test-optional policies through the 2023-24 application cycle, with some making the move to test-optional even longer or permanent. More recently, a certain few very selective schools have reinstated their standardized testing requirements. Even if these schools are not on your college list, it is worth considering the advantages and disadvantages of submitting test scores as other schools are likely to follow suit.

## What Exactly is 'Test-

## Optional' and How is it Different from 'Test Blind'?

Test-optional institutions do not require submission of standardized testing scores but will still accept and review SAT and ACT scores when evaluating your application, should you choose to submit them. In a test-blind admissions policy, which is much less common, even if you choose to submit your test scores, those scores will not factor into the application evaluation process. Rather than making it optional, a move that might make those unable to test feel disadvantaged, this approach eliminates testing as a consideration altogether.

## Is the 'Test-Optional' Policy Here to Stay?

It's unclear how many colleges will choose

to adopt a test-optional policy permanently. Many schools, like Harvard University have committed to staying test-optional for the next few years. Some schools, like those in the University of California system have committed to remain test-blind for the foreseeable future, while Columbia University has implemented a permanent test-optional policy. On the other hand, some schools have already reinstated their testing requirements, like MIT, Dartmouth, Yale and most recently Brown.

## Should I Still Submit My Scores to a College with a 'Test-Optional' Policy?

So that is the bingo question. A test-optional policy may work in your favor if you do not have the strongest test results, but the rest of your profile fits the school very

well; in this case, it is best to err on the side of caution and submit scores when you can. Although choosing to withhold standardized testing results does not initially hinder your application, it could mean the difference of admission between you and another strong candidate who did opt to submit results.

Some data indicates that even when schools say they are test optional they admit at a higher rate those who submit scores. My thought is that it adds one more important measure to the mix and schools prefer more objective measures of achievement to consider. I also think that when a school sees a strong test score from a student from underserved or otherwise challenged environments, they will take the student's envi-

ronmental context into account and may be more inclined to admit the applicant.

It is also important to consider that test scores are one of the most significant metrics used in calculating college rankings and colleges that adopt test-optional policies may favor candidates who submit scores for their own ranking purposes. After all, many ranking systems (including the one developed by U.S. News & World Report) will only factor in a certain percentage of their applicants submit them, and the methodology also includes how strong the admitted applicants test scores are. Thus, there is an advantage to schools that admit applicants with higher test scores.



Elizabeth LaScala, PhD [Elizabeth@doingcollege.com](mailto:Elizabeth@doingcollege.com) (925) 330-8801 Elizabeth LaScala, Ph.D. is dedicated to providing personalized college and graduate school admissions expertise to students and their families locally, nationally and abroad. College and graduate school admissions are more competitive than ever. Doing College utilizes exclusive admissions tools, customized strategies and a network of dedicated professionals to help each student navigate the complex college and graduate school admissions process with confidence and success.