

Couscous Salad

Couscous became a known food product around the 12th century and is most often associated with North African cuisine. It's actually a tiny pasta and not a grain. Traditionally it was cooked with sour milk and butter.

Tonight we'll cook it in a more conventional manner. Couscous will be fully cooked in about 10 minutes. We'll then add a boat-load of goodies to make this fabulous one-dish meal.

Preparation time: 45 minutes - Serves: 4

Organize Your Ingredients!

Notes on Organizing

Prep and organize ingredients in small bowls so they are easy to add. Prep 2 cloves of garlic tonight: 1 chopped clove for the salad and 1 whole peeled clove for the dressing.

Couscous

1 C. water
1/2 cube Not Chick'n bouillon
3/4 C. low-sodium vegetable broth

2 tsp. olive oil
1-1/2 C. uncooked couscous

Dressing for Salad

1 clove garlic (whole, peeled)
12 fresh basil leaves
2 T. olive oil
1/4 C. balsamic vinegar
1/4 C. low-sodium vegetable broth
1/2 tsp. low-sodium soy sauce

Salad Ingredients

1 tsp. olive oil
1 C. cremini mushrooms (sliced)
1 clove garlic (smashed and chopped)

2 tsp. olive oil
1 yellow summer squash (chopped)
1 baby zucchini (chopped)
3/4 C. sweet onion (chopped)
2/3 C. red bell peppers (chopped)

1 cucumber (peeled and chopped)
6 pitted Calamata olives (chopped)
One 15 oz. can garbanzo beans (drained and rinsed)
one 15 oz. can artichoke hearts (rinsed and chopped)
1/4 C. fresh parsley (chopped)

2 Roma tomatoes (chopped)
3 T. crumbled feta cheese

Remaining Dinner Items

1 loaf rustic artisan bread
4 fresh apricots (pitted and quartered)

Let's Prepare, Cook, and Plate This!

Basic Assembly Instructions

Start by making the bouillon broth and cooking the couscous.

Dissolve the bouillon cube in 1 C. boiling water.

Couscous:

1. Heat oil in the bottom of a small saucepan and toss couscous in hot oil for about 1 minute. (This step just toasts it a little before you add water.)
2. Add measured bouillon and low-sodium vegetable broths, bring to a boil, cover, and remove from heat.

Dressing for Salad

Blend dressing ingredients with a hand blender or in a food processor.

Salad Ingredients

1. Brown mushrooms in olive oil. Add garlic and toss until garlic becomes fragrant. Transfer to a large mixing bowl.
2. Return same sauté pan to heat and measure additional oil into pan. Heat oil until it begins to shimmer. Add chopped summer squash, zucchini, sweet onions and peppers. Toss over high heat until onions begin to brown. Transfer to the bowl with mushrooms.
3. Toss cucumber, olives, garbanzo beans, artichoke hearts and parsley into bowl with cooked vegetables.
4. Use a fork to break up cooked couscous so that it doesn't clump up in the salad. Transfer couscous to the bowl with cooked vegetables. Add chopped tomatoes. Pour dressing over all ingredients and toss.
5. Top bowl with feta cheese crumbles. Chill until ready to dine.

Remaining Dinner Items/Plate

About 15 minutes before you wish to dine, warm a loaf of rustic artisan bread in a 220° oven.

Place halved or quartered apricots along the rim of each plate (*as in photo*). One serving equals 1 apricot.

Spoon 2 C. salad per serving onto dinner plates. Serve with sliced warm rustic bread.

What I've Learned from this Recipe

Couscous can be prepared by simply combining couscous with boiling water. I prefer using the oil and broth technique as it comes out tasting a little richer.

Let us know what you think, and ask any questions you may have! chezdon@plate6.com