

Summer Vegetable Couscous

contributed by Rose Melgoza

This is another recipe inspired by Sarah Leah Chase, who writes wonderful cookbooks. It has many Middle Eastern flavors and textures that all complement each other: couscous with cinnamon and ginger plus raisins, dates, chickpeas, and toasted almonds. In summer, it's the perfect accompaniment to grilled chicken or fish.

Makes 6-8 servings

Ingredients

- 3 cups good chicken stock
- Good olive oil
- 1 1/2 teaspoons ground turmeric
- 1 1/2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- 1 1/2 teaspoons ground ginger
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 2 cups couscous
- 1/4 cup golden raisins
- 1/4 cup diced dried pitted dates
- 1 medium zucchini, 1/4 -inch-diced
- 2 carrots, 1/4-inch-diced
- 1/2 red onion, 1/4-inch-diced
- 1/2 cup canned chickpeas, rinsed and drained
- 1/4 cup freshly squeezed lemon juice (2 lemons)
- 1/2 cup blanched sliced almonds, toasted (see note)

Instructions

- Place the chicken stock, 2 tablespoons olive oil, turmeric, cinnamon, ginger, and 1 teaspoon pepper in a large saucepan and bring to a boil. Off the heat, stir in the couscous, raisins, and cover, and set aside for 15 minutes.
- In a large bowl, combine the zucchini, carrots, red onion, and chickpeas. Fluff the couscous with a fork and add it to the vegetables.
- Whisk together the lemon juice and 1/4 cup of olive oil and pour it over the couscous. Carefully fold in the toasted almonds, taste for seasonings, and serve at room temperature. The flavors will meld the longer it sits.

Notes: *To toast almonds place them in a small saute pan over low heat and cook for 5 to 7 minutes, tossing frequently, until lightly browned.*

MAKE IT AHEAD: *Prepare the couscous completely, cover, and refrigerate for up to 2 days. Serve at room temperature.*