

Moroccan couscous salad

recipe by Nicola Moores

Dairy-free, vegan, vegetarian, refined-sugar free.

Serves 4

Time to make: 35 minutes

Ingredients:

2 courgettes, ends trimmed
1 large or 2 small aubergines, ends trimmed
½ cup extra virgin olive oil
1 ½ tsp flakey sea salt
½ tsp freshly ground black pepper
1 ¼ cups water
1 tsp vegetable broth powder
1 tsp ground cinnamon
1 C wholewheat couscous
2 spring onions, ends trimmed
Juice of 1 lemon
1 avocado
2 handfuls fresh herbs (mint, parsley, coriander), stems discarded
¼ cup pistachios roasted & salted, shelled
4 cloves garlic, crushed and peeled
¼ cup currants
¼ cup pomegranate arils

Method:


Preheat the oven to 220°C fan bake mode.

Cut the courgettes and aubergine into 5mm rounds and transfer to a mixing bowl. Drizzle over half of the olive oil, season with 1 tsp. of the salt and all of the pepper. Using your hands, toss together so that the vegetables are lightly coated in the oil.

Lay the vegetables out in one single layer over 2 flat baking trays and bake in the oven for 20 minutes or until golden with crispy edges. Be sure to check on the vegetables and rotate the oven trays halfway through the cooking time.

Meanwhile, prepare the couscous. Put the water, broth powder, cinnamon and the rest of the salt in a small saucepan. Bring the water to the boil, pour in the couscous and give the pan a quick shake so that the couscous is completely submerged. Immediately cover with a lid, remove from the heat and set aside to rest for 10 minutes before fluffing up with a fork and transferring to a large mixing bowl to cool.

Finely slice the spring onions, transfer to a small bowl and pour over half of the lemon juice. Massage the juice into the spring onions and set aside.

Cut the avocado in half, remove the stone, scoop out the flesh and cut into chunks.  over the remaining lemon juice and set aside.

Finely chop the herbs and roughly chop the pistachios and set aside separately.

Remove the vegetables from the oven and whilst still hot, use a bench scraper to gently scrape the vegetables back into their original mixing bowl. Add the garlic, pour over the rest of the olive oil, cover and let sit for 10 minutes or longer to marinate.

To assemble the salad, add the marinated vegetables (without the raw garlic and excess oil), spring onion, avocado, herbs and currants to the bowl of couscous and gently toss to combine. Transfer to a serving platter and sprinkle over the pistachios and pomegranate arils.

NB: For a gluten-free alternative, replace the couscous quantity with rinsed quinoa and double the amount of water. When it comes to cooking, put the rinsed quinoa, water, broth powder, cinnamon and ½ tsp. of the salt in a small saucepan, cover with a lid, bring to the boil, reduce the heat and simmer for 15 minutes or until all of the liquid has been absorbed. Then remove from the heat and set aside to rest for 10 minutes before fluffing up with a fork and transferring to a large mixing bowl to cool.

NB: The vegetables and couscous can be prepared well in advance and kept in airtight containers / jars in the fridge for up to a few days, just make sure you bring them to room temperature before assembling the salad. The salad will also keep in the fridge in an airtight container for up to a few days.

