

Couscous with squash, sultanas and pumpkin seeds

Try this delicious couscous using Zaytoun maftoul...

Large-grain Palestinian couscous, or maftoul, is easier to cook than ordinary couscous (as in it's less likely to go mushy) and carries very well the flavours of everything you put with it. If you like, add some soft goat's cheese to the mix, too.

Serves four.

Ingredients

70g sultanas
60g pumpkin seeds
1 medium-sized squash (about 750g)
3-4 tbsp olive oil
1 tsp ground cumin
Flaky sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
200g large-grain couscous
Water or vegetable stock
1 handful picked flat-leafed parsley, finely chopped
3 tbsp finely chopped dill
1 tbsp apple balsamic vinegar or cider vinegar



Put the sultanas in a bowl, pour over hot water or hot tea and leave them to plump up a bit. Warm a frying pan over a medium heat and toast the pumpkin seeds, rattling the pan from time to time, until fragrant and toasted. Tip into a bowl and set aside.

Heat the oven to 190C/375F/gas mark 5. Peel the squash, halve it and remove the seeds and fibres. Cut it into largish chunks of about 3cm and place in a roasting tin. Toss in two tablespoons of the olive oil, sprinkle on the cumin, salt and pepper, and toss again. Roast for 30-35 minutes, rattling the tin halfway through, until soft in the middle and gently charred around the edges.

Cook the couscous in water or stock according to the instructions on the packet.

To assemble the salad, toss the drained sultanas, pumpkin seeds and herbs with the couscous until well combined. Trickle over the remaining tablespoon or two of olive oil and the vinegar, and toss again. Taste, adjust the seasoning as necessary, and when you've achieved the balance of flavour you like, toss gently with the squash. Serve hot or cold.