Couscous with Preserved Lemon and Pine Nuts

Warm the couscous a second time with a little butter. A fork lifts the grains apart before the fruit, nuts and mint go in.



SERVES 4 AS A SIDE / SMALL SAUCEPAN WITH LID AND FRYING PAN

Prep 10 min · Cook 5 min · Stand 5 min

Ingredients

1 Australian cup (250 ml) instant fine couscous

250 ml salt-reduced vegetable stock, or as directed on the couscous packet

10 ml vegetable oil and 20 g unsalted butter

15 g each pine nuts, currants and dried apricots

10 g preserved lemon rind (about ⅛ lemon), pulp removed

2 tablespoons loosely packed fresh mint leaves, finely sliced

Salt and black pepper, to taste

At the stove

1. Toast and chop

Toast the pine nuts in a dry pan. Chop the apricots and finely dice the rinsed lemon rind.

2. Steam the grains

Bring the stock and oil to the boil. Stir in the couscous, cover, take off the heat and leave to swell.

3. Fluff and finish

Melt the butter over low heat. Lift the couscous through it with a fork, then fold in the fruit, nuts, lemon and mint.

KOOK'S SECRET

Try a grain before you add the butter. If it still has a hard centre, sprinkle in a tablespoon of hot water, cover and give it another minute.

Couscous with Preserved Lemon and Pine Nuts

The full method

01 **Prepare the additions**
Toast the pine nuts in a dry frying pan over medium-low heat for 2–3 minutes, shaking often. Tip onto a plate as soon as they colour. Chop the apricots into currant-sized pieces. Rinse the lemon rind, pat dry and dice it finely.

02 **Soak the couscous**
Bring the stock and oil to the boil in a small saucepan. Take off the heat, stir in the couscous once, then cover tightly. Leave for about 5 minutes or follow the packet. The grains should absorb the stock and feel tender.

03 **Lift the grains**
Melt the butter in the frying pan over low heat. Tip in the couscous. Draw a fork through it for 1–2 minutes, lifting and separating the clumps until the butter has coated the grains.

04 **Finish and serve**
Fold in the currants, apricots, pine nuts and preserved lemon. Take the pan off the heat, add the mint and taste a spoonful before seasoning. Serve warm.

FROM MARK'S KITCHEN

Cut the lemon rind finer than the apricots. Little flecks give several forkfuls a lift from the same small piece of lemon.