

Freekeh Salad with Shiitake, Kale and Peppadews

Serves 4 to 6:

Ingredients

1 cup freekeh, whole grain or cracked
3 cups water
kosher salt

1 tablespoon olive oil
3 garlic cloves, minced
1/2 pound shiitake mushrooms, stemmed and diced
5 lacinato kale leaves, stemmed and chopped
kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
1/2 cup peppadews, drained and chopped
3 ounces goat cheese, crumbled

Cumin Honey Dressing:

2 tablespoons red wine vinegar
1/2 teaspoon cumin
1 teaspoon honey
kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
1/2 cup best quality extra virgin olive oil

Preparation

Combine the freekeh, water and a pinch of salt in a small saucepan and bring to a boil. Stir, reduce the heat to a simmer, cover the pan and continue cooking--20 minutes for the cracked variety, 40 minutes for the whole grain.

In the meantime, warm olive oil in a skillet over medium low heat. Remove the stems from the shiitake and discard; dice the mushroom caps. Add minced garlic to the pan and cook for 30 seconds, then add the mushrooms. Sauté for 4 to 5 minutes, stirring once or twice, until the mushrooms begin to soften.

Rinse and chop kale leaves, making sure to remove the tough center stem. Add them to the mushrooms in the pan with any water that still clings to the leaves. Season lightly with kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper and then cover the pan.

Turn up heat slightly and cook, stirring occasionally, for 8 to 10 minutes, until kale is wilted and tender. Remove from heat.

Make Cumin Honey Dressing: in a small bowl, whisk together red wine vinegar, cumin, honey, kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper.

Slowly add the extra virgin olive oil and whisk until emulsified.

Drain the cooked freekeh, place in a medium bowl and immediately toss with the dressing--the warm grains will absorb the flavor of the vinaigrette.

Mix the freekeh with the shiitake kale mixture.

Add the chopped peppadews (roasted peppers would also work) and crumble the goat cheese on top.

Give all a good toss, taste and adjust seasoning if needed, and serve immediately.

passioneats | 4.17.2013

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