

Couscous Salad with Fennel and Raisins

Makes: 4 servings

Time: 30 minutes

Delicate and fluffy couscous is so quick cooking, this salad can be considered almost last minute. It's worth the extra few minutes to make the vinaigrette since the flavors are absorbed more evenly into the pasta than if you dress with separate oil and lemon juice. This is really good with fregola, the large and heavily toasted couscous from Sardinia.

Ingredients

- 2½ cups cooked couscous, regular or whole wheat
- 1/2 cup port or red wine
- 1/2 cup raisins
- 1 large fennel bulb
- 1/4–1/2 cup Lemon Vinaigrette (recipe below)
- 1 teaspoon fennel seeds
- Salt and pepper

Instructions

1. Put the port in a small pot over medium heat and warm until steaming but not boiling. Add the raisins and soak until they're plump and tender, 5 to 10 minutes. When the couscous is ready, fluff it with a fork and let it cool a bit.
2. Trim the fennel, reserving a few of the feathery fronds for garnish. Cut the bulb in half lengthwise, then slice each half thinly.
3. Put the raisins and port in a large bowl with 1/4 cup of the vinaigrette and the fennel seeds; whisk to combine. Add the couscous and fennel and toss gently until they're evenly coated. (At this point you can let the salad sit for up to an hour; in fact, it will benefit if you have the time.) Taste and adjust the seasoning, and add more vinaigrette as you like.

Lemon Vinaigrette

Makes: About 3/4 cup

Time: 5 minutes

Ingredients

- 1/2 cup extra virgin olive oil

- 1/4 cup lemon juice
- Salt and pepper
- 1 tablespoon chopped shallot (optional)

Instructions

1. Put the oil, lemon juice, a pinch of salt, and lots of pepper in a blender and turn the machine on; a creamy emulsion will form within 30 seconds. (A tablespoon of warm water will help the mixture emulsify.) Taste and add more vinegar a teaspoon or 2 at a time until the balance tastes right to you.

2. Add the shallot if you're using it, and turn the machine on and off a few times until the shallot is minced within the dressing. Taste, adjust the seasoning, and serve. This is best made fresh but will keep, refrigerated, for a few days. (Bring it back to room temperature and whisk briefly before using.)

— *Recipes from [How to Cook Everything Vegetarian](#)*