

Spiced Pearl Couscous

A delicious one-pot meal with lots of fresh herbs and spices. The eggplant and tomatoes cook down into a nice savory jam. Don't skip on the labneh (or yogurt) as it's essential to the creaminess and overall dish. Best paired with the Lolati 2021 Kikoi Red Blend.



Ingredients

Serves 4

- 7 tbsp extra virgin olive oil, divided, plus more for serving
- 2 medium yellow onions, thinly sliced (about 4 cups)
- 1¼ pounds Italian eggplant, cut into 1-inch cubes
- 2 tsp kosher salt
- ½ tsp freshly ground black pepper
- 4 garlic cloves, finely grated or minced
- 2 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- ½ tsp sweet paprika
- ½ tsp smoked paprika
- 2 cups pearl couscous
- 1 (14.5-ounce) can diced tomatoes
- 1 cup fresh basil leaves, coarsely chopped, plus more for garnish
- 1 cup fresh mint leaves, coarsely chopped, plus more for garnish
- Labneh or Greek yogurt, for serving
- Flaky sea salt, for serving

Procedure

Step 1

Heat a 12-inch skillet over medium-high heat. Add 3 tablespoons of the oil and let it heat for a few seconds, until it thins out to coat the pan, then add the onions. Cook, stirring occasionally, until softened and golden, about 6 minutes.

Step 2

Add the eggplant, 1 teaspoon of the kosher salt, the pepper, and the remaining 4 tablespoons oil to the pan. Cook, stirring once or twice, until the eggplant is browned, about 10 minutes. Add the garlic, cinnamon, cumin, and sweet and smoked paprikas and stir until fragrant, about 1 minute.

Step 3

Stir in the couscous, tomatoes, remaining 1 teaspoon salt, and 2¾ cups water, cover, reduce the heat to low, and simmer until the couscous has absorbed all the liquid and is tender, 10 to 14 minutes. Stir occasionally while cooking, scraping up any bits that stick to the bottom of the pan. Add more water, 1 tablespoon at a time, if the pan seems dry. Turn off the heat and let the couscous rest, covered, for 2 minutes. Uncover and add the basil and mint, tossing until well combined.

Step 4

Serve immediately, dolloped with labneh, sprinkled with flaky salt and more herbs, and drizzled with oil.