

March 27, 2011

To get a head start: The rice pudding can be made 1 day ahead. Transfer the pudding to a medium bowl and let cool to room temperature, stirring a few times. Cover and refrigerate. The rice will continue to absorb liquid—you may need to add a bit of chilled milk or half-and-half just before serving to loosen it. Keep the infused date strips separate, cover with plastic wrap and garnish the pudding just before serving.

To lighten it up: Use whole milk instead of half-and-half for an everyday treat.

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Lentil Soup with Pasta

Instead of using pancetta, ask your butcher or delicatessen for prosciutto ends. The cost should be a fraction of the price of sliced prosciutto.

In a large pot over medium-high heat, warm the olive oil. Add the pancetta and sauté until lightly browned, about 2 minutes. Add the onion, garlic, carrot, celery and sage and sauté until the vegetables are softened, about 3 minutes.

Stir in the lentils and tomatoes and cook, stirring occasionally, for 5 minutes. Increase the heat to high, add the 6 cups broth and bring to a boil. Add the 1 Tbs. salt, reduce the heat to medium-low and simmer, partially covered, until the lentils are nearly tender, 30 to 40 minutes. Add more broth if the soup starts to dry out.

Add the pasta to the lentils. Cook, stirring occasionally to prevent sticking, until the pasta is not quite al dente, about 2 minutes less than the package instructions. The pasta will continue to cook in the heat of the soup. Season with salt and pepper. Ladle the soup into bowls and serve immediately. Serves 4.

Adapted from Williams-Sonoma Food Made Fast Series, *Pasta*, by Julia della Croce (Oxmoor House, 2006).

Artichoke and White Bean Salad

For extra flavor, sprinkle the artichoke hearts with olive oil, salt and pepper, and roast for 15 minutes in a preheated 400°F oven. For a variation, add 1 jar Italian tuna packed in oil.

To make the dressing, in a small bowl, whisk together the olive oil, lemon juice, garlic, mustard, red pepper flakes and fennel seeds. Season with salt and pepper. Let stand for at least 30 minutes or up to 4 hours to allow the flavors to blend.

In a large bowl, combine the artichoke hearts, white beans, onion, celery and oregano. Add the dressing and toss to coat the salad evenly. Transfer the salad to a serving bowl or, for transporting, pack in an airtight container. Serves 8.

Make-ahead tip: The salad can be prepared in advance, covered and refrigerated for up to 24 hours. Remove from the refrigerator 30 minutes before serving.

Adapted from Williams-Sonoma *Easy Entertaining*, by George Dolese (Simon & Schuster, 2005).

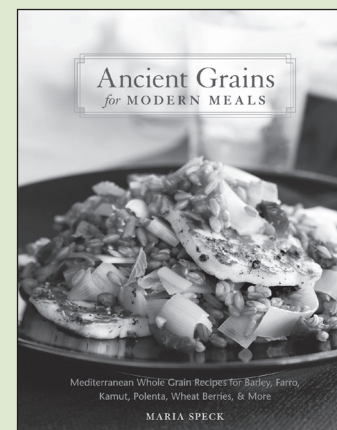
Ingredients for Lentil Soup with Pasta

- 3 Tbs. olive oil
- 2 oz. chopped pancetta or bacon
- 1 small yellow onion, chopped
- 2 large garlic cloves, minced
- 1 carrot, finely chopped
- 1 celery stalk, finely chopped
- 1 Tbs. minced fresh sage
- 2 cups lentils
- 1 cup canned whole plum tomatoes, chopped, with juice
- 6 cups chicken broth, plus more if needed
- 1 Tbs. salt, plus more, to taste
- ¼ lb. tubettini, ditalini or other small soup pasta
- Freshly ground pepper, to taste

Ingredients for Artichoke and White Bean Salad

For the dressing:

- ½ cup olive oil
- ¼ cup fresh lemon juice
- 1 garlic clove, thinly sliced
- 1 tsp. Dijon mustard
- ¼ tsp. red pepper flakes
- 1 tsp. ground fennel seeds
- Salt and freshly ground pepper, to taste
- 1 package frozen quartered artichoke hearts, thawed
- 2 cans (each 15 oz.) white beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 small red onion, diced
- 2 celery stalks, thinly sliced
- 2 Tbs. chopped fresh oregano



Introducing *Ancient Grains for Modern Meals*

Food writer Maria Speck's passion for propelling Old World staples such as farro, barley, polenta and wheat berries to the forefront of new American cooking is beautifully presented in *Ancient Grains for Modern Meals*. In this inspired and highly personal book, Maria Speck draws on food traditions from across the Mediterranean and northern Europe to reveal how versatile, satisfying, flavorful and sophisticated whole grains can be.

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Technique Class: Great Grains & Legumes

What Is a Grain?

Quite literally, a world of grains awaits the adventurous cook eager to journey beyond tried-and-true staples such as rice and oats. In all their various forms, these edible seeds of cultivated grasses or other plants are outstanding sources of carbohydrate, fiber, protein and other nutrients.

A Cornucopia of Grains			
• Barley	• Buckwheat	• Bulgur	• Cornmeal
• Couscous	• Grits	• Hominy	• Kamut
• Kasha	• Millet	• Oats	• Polenta
• Quinoa	• Rice	• Rye	• Triticale
• Wheat (Farro, Kamut, Spelt)			

Grain Terminology

The following terms apply to the structure and processing of grains:

Berries: Plump individual whole grains, particularly of wheat and rye.

Endosperm: The soft inner portion of grain, loaded with nutrients; often the only part of it that is eaten.

Flake: Flat pieces of grain formed either by pressing between high-pressured rollers or by fine slicing.

Germ: The embryo contained within every whole grain, which would grow if the grain were planted and watered. The oil-rich germ is often removed during milling to prevent flour from going rancid. It is nutritious, however, and is often sold separately.

Hull: The tough outer husk of some grains such as barley, oats and rice.

Pearl: A term for polishing grains like barley to remove their tough hulls.

Rolled: Applies particularly to oats that are hulled and then steamed and flattened between rollers for quick-cooking flakes.

What Is a Legume?

Beans, peas and lentils (known collectively as legumes) are among the most healthful of foods. They are low in fat and high in protein, fiber, carbohydrates, vitamins and minerals. Legumes are a practical, economical food with a long shelf life, keeping well for a year when stored airtight in a cool, dry cupboard.

Dried Legume Varieties			
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Adzuki bean	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Black bean (turtle, Mexican or Spanish black bean)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Black-eyed pea (cowpea)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Cannellini
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Chickpea (garbanzo, ceci bean)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Cranberry bean (borlotti, Roman)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Fava bean (broad bean, English bean or horse bean)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Flageolet
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Great Northern bean (white bean)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Kidney bean (red bean)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Lentil	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Lima bean (butter bean)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Mung bean	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Navy bean	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Pink bean	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Pinto bean
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Soybean	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Spilt pea	<ul style="list-style-type: none">White bean	

Black Bean, Corn and Quinoa Salad

This delicious salad, very similar to Mediterranean tabbouleh, is a staple throughout the Andean region. Quinoa, one of the ancestral Inca and Chibcha Indian crops, is harvested from Colombia to Argentina in the higher Andean plains. Quinoa is prized for its earthy yet delicate flavor, as well as its nutritional value. The medley of the Peruvian corn with glossy black beans, pale gold quinoa, and red tomatoes and bell pepper make this an eye-catching and colorful salad.

To make the dressing, in a bowl, whisk together the lime juice, vinegar, cilantro, *ají* paste, oregano, salt and pepper. Add the olive oil in a thin stream, whisking constantly until smooth and emulsified. Set aside.

In a saucepan over medium-high heat, combine the quinoa and 1½ cups water. Stir in the salt. Cover and bring to a boil, then reduce the heat to low and simmer until the quinoa is tender and all the water has been absorbed, about 10 minutes. Transfer the quinoa to a colander and rinse under cold running water. Drain thoroughly, then transfer to a large nonreactive bowl.

Add the black beans to the bowl with the quinoa. Pat the corn dry with paper towels and add to the bowl, along with the tomato and bell pepper. Pour in the dressing and stir to coat all the ingredients well. Transfer the salad to a large serving bowl or individual plates and serve immediately. Serves 6.

Adapted from Williams-Sonoma *Essentials of Latin Cooking*, by Patricia McCausland-Gallo, Deborah Schneider & Beverly Cox (Oxmoor House, 2010).

Ingredients for Black Bean, Corn and Quinoa Salad

For the dressing:

2 Tbs. fresh lime juice

3 Tbs. white vinegar

2 Tbs. minced fresh cilantro

¼ tsp. *ají amarillo* paste

¼ tsp. dried oregano

½ tsp. salt

½ tsp. freshly ground pepper

½ cup olive oil

½ cup quinoa

¼ tsp. salt

1 cup drained cooked black beans, or purchased

¾ cup thawed frozen corn kernels, preferably Peruvian

1 tomato, seeded and finely diced

1 small red bell pepper, seeded and finely diced

Speedy Chickpea Couscous with Pesto

A double boost of basil, from the pesto and the fresh leaves, gives this whole wheat couscous a flavor lift. It's perfect for busy weeknights when you are starving for quick and easy carbs. Home-cooked beans taste best, but canned work fine when you're in a rush. And pesto from a jar is a perfectly good replacement for homemade. Serve next to sautéed fish or chicken.

Pour the broth into a medium saucepan and bring to a boil. Remove the saucepan from the heat. Stir in the couscous, chickpeas, pesto, 2 Tbs. of the basil, the garlic, the ½ tsp. salt and the ¼ tsp. pepper. Cover and let sit until the liquid is absorbed, about 10 minutes.

Taste and adjust the seasonings with salt and pepper. Fluff the couscous with 2 forks, sprinkle with the remaining 2 Tbs. basil and serve immediately. Serves 4.

To vary it: Garnish with ¼ cup chopped toasted pistachios or make it a light meal with crumbled ricotta salata, goat cheese or feta cheese and a few olives.

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Purple Rice Pudding with Rose Water Dates

The first time author Maria Speck tasted rose water in a milky pudding as a child in Turkey, she was overwhelmed by its intensity. Always the curious eater, she tried again, wondering whether she could ever like this flavor, and then again and again, and again. Rose water has this effect on you. Its concentrated, bold aroma, evoking the serenity of churches or mosques, does require some getting used to, but when you do, you will never stop longing for it.

To prepare the rice, in a small heavy-bottomed saucepan, bring the water and rice to a boil. Reduce the heat to maintain a simmer, cover and cook until the rice is tender yet still slightly chewy, about 30 minutes. Some water will remain (do not drain).

While the rice is cooking, prepare the date topping: Place the chopped dates in a small bowl and drizzle with 2 tsp. of the rose water. Place the date strips in a different small bowl and drizzle with the remaining 1 tsp. rose water. Stir the dates in both bowls and set aside, stirring once or twice more.

To finish, add the half-and-half, sugar, salt, ½ tsp. of the lemon zest, the cinnamon stick and vanilla to the rice. Return the rice to a boil over medium-high heat, stirring several times. Reduce the heat to maintain a gentle bubble and cook, uncovered, for 15 minutes more, stirring every few minutes or so. The consistency should be creamy yet soupy—the mixture will thicken as it cools. Remove the saucepan from the heat and remove the cinnamon stick. Stir in the chopped dates and the remaining ½ tsp. lemon zest.

Divide the rice pudding among small individual dessert bowls or cups. Garnish with a few of the rose water–infused date strips, and serve warm or at room temperature. Serves 4.

Continued on next page

Ingredients for Speedy Chickpea Couscous with Pesto

1½ cups low-sodium chicken broth or vegetable broth

1 cup whole wheat couscous

¾ cup canned chickpeas, rinsed and drained (about half of a 14-oz. can)

3 Tbs. pesto

4 Tbs. chopped fresh basil

1 garlic clove, minced

½ tsp. fine sea salt, plus more, to taste

¼ tsp. freshly ground pepper, plus more, to taste

Ingredients for Purple Rice Pudding with Rose Water Dates

For the rice:

1¼ cups water

½ cup Chinese black rice

For the date topping:

¼ cup finely chopped pitted dates

3 tsp. rose water

2 dates, pitted and cut into thin strips

For the rice pudding and to finish:

1¼ cups half-and-half

2 Tbs. turbinado sugar

Pinch of fine sea salt

1 tsp. finely grated lemon zest

1 (1-inch) piece of cinnamon stick

½ tsp. vanilla extract