

MEDITERRANEAN COUSCOUS SALAD

You'll love this Mediterranean couscous salad recipe, loaded with nutrition and flavour from chickpeas, veggies, fresh herbs and a fresh lemon vinaigrette. This versatile dish makes a great lunch, light supper, or side depending on what you need. And you can make it ahead; the flavours deepen the next day.

🕒 Prep Time: 15 Mins. | 🕒 Cook Time: 20-25 Mins. | Serves: many 🍽️

Ingredients

For the Lemon-Dill Vinaigrette

- 1 large lemon, juice of
- ⅓ cup extra virgin olive oil (I used Greek Private Reserve)
- 1 tsp dill weed
- 1 to 2 garlic cloves, minced
- salt and pepper

For the Pearl Couscous

- 2 cups Pearl Couscous
- 1 tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
- Water to cook couscous
- 2 cups grape tomatoes, halved
- ⅓ cup finely chopped red onions
- ½ English cucumber, finely chopped
- 15 oz can chickpeas, drained and rinsed
- 14 oz can artichoke hearts, roughly chopped if needed
- ½ cup pitted kalamata olives
- 15-20 fresh basil leaves, roughly chopped or torn: more for garnish
- 3 oz fresh baby mozzarella (or feta cheese), optional

Directions:

1. To make the lemon-dill vinaigrette, place the vinaigrette ingredients in a bowl. Whisk together to combine. Set aside briefly.
2. In a medium-sized heavy pot, heat two tablespoons of olive oil.

3. Sauté the couscous in the olive oil briefly until golden brown.
4. Add 3 cups of boiling water or chicken stock for extra flavour (or the amount instructed on the package), and cook according to the package. When ready, drain in a colander. Set aside in a bowl to cool.
5. In a large mixing bowl, combine the remaining ingredients minus the basil and mozzarella.
6. Then add the couscous and the basil and mix gently.
7. Now, give the lemon-dill vinaigrette a quick whisk and add it to the couscous salad.
8. Mix again to combine.
9. Finally, mix in the mozzarella cheese.
Garnish with more fresh basil. Enjoy!

NOTES

Cook's Tip:

1. Toast the pearl couscous in extra virgin olive oil. Don't skip this first step and go right to the boiling water; toasting the couscous in extra virgin olive oil is a great way to deepen its colour and flavour. It takes very little time and makes a big difference.
2. Feel free to play with the vegetable options and canned beans you have on hand. This salad can take so many different variations, so take advantage and use what you have. You can try bell peppers, broccoli, carrots...You can add some spinach or a different herb than basil. Just have fun!
3. To keep this recipe vegan, simply omit the cheese. You can try a different kind of cheese, such as feta. And feel free to make this couscous salad your own by changing up the vegetables and herbs according to what you have on hand. Try spinach, bell peppers, carrots, or small chopped broccoli, for example. If basil is not available, use mint or parsley.
4. **Make-Ahead.** You can make this couscous salad the evening before if you like, toss it and keep it in the fridge in a tight-lid container (hold the mozzarella cheese until you're ready to serve.) The flavours will deepen overnight; just be sure to give the salad a quick toss to refresh before serving. If you want to make it ahead as part of your lunch prep, hold the dressing, onions, and cheese and just use them as you need for each lunch portion. It should keep well in the fridge in a tight-lid container for 3 to 4 days.