

Head Start

An Amazing Grain

Quick-cooking couscous makes a standout side dish or main meal

IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR THE PERFECT RUSH-HOUR INGREDIENT, COUSCOUS IS THE HANDS-DOWN WINNER. Made plain or from a seasoned mix, this North African-style pasta is ready in five minutes. The delicious, tiny grains taste similar to Italian pasta because both are made from semolina wheat. But with couscous, there's no pot watching required—the grains “cook” up light and fluffy by absorbing boiling liquid after they're removed from heat.

• Try couscous in this quick side dish; it's also superb in salads, casseroles, vegetable and meat stuffings, soups, stews, and desserts.

SAVORY APRICOT-PECAN COUSCOUS

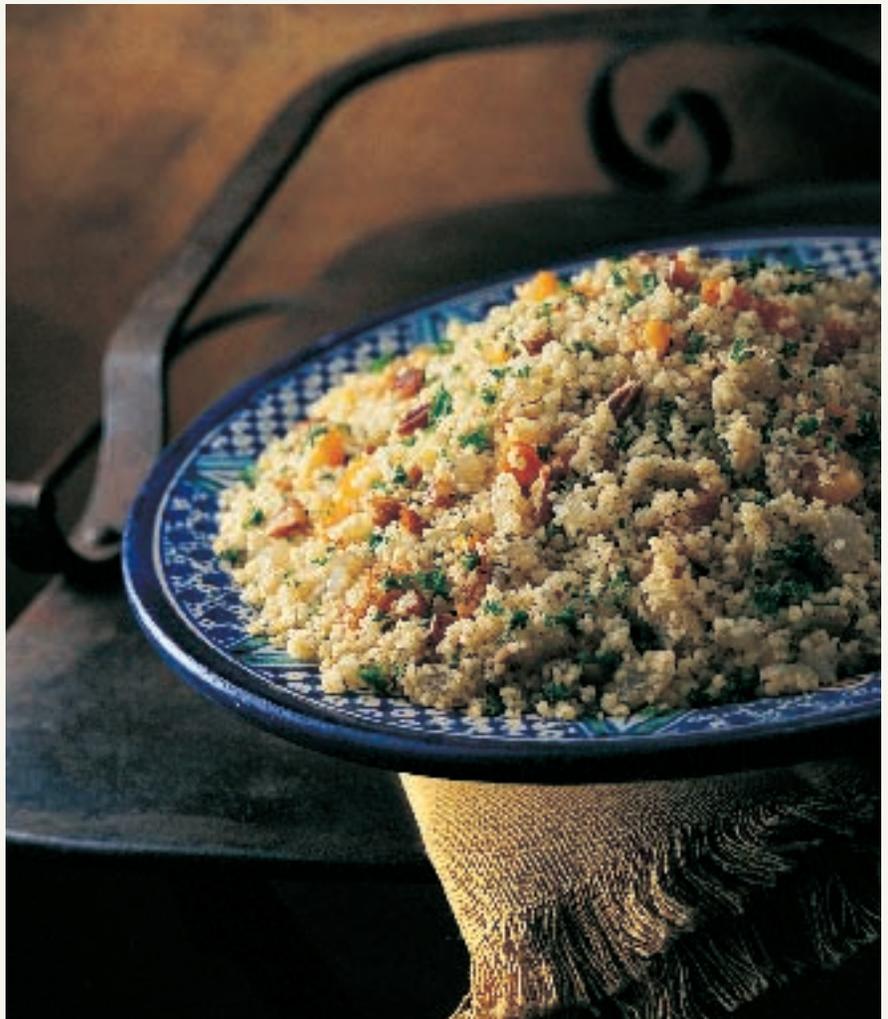
PREP AND COOK TIME: 20 to 25 minutes

NOTES: This dish enhances flavorful meats like roast turkey, duck, lamb, and ham. You can make it up to 2 days ahead and refrigerate it in an airtight container. Or freeze it airtight up to 1 month.

MAKES: 5 1-cup servings, or 4 1¼-cup servings

- 1 tablespoon Safeway SELECT Extra-Virgin Olive Oil
- 1 cup diced white or yellow onion
- ½ cup thinly sliced dried apricots
- 1 teaspoon finely chopped or puréed fresh garlic
- 1 teaspoon ground coriander
- 1 teaspoon ground thyme
- 2¼ cups nonfat chicken broth
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1⅓ cups (10 oz.) plain couscous, uncooked
- ½ cup Safeway SELECT Pecan Halves, chopped
- 2 tablespoons chopped parsley

1. In a 2-quart nonstick pan over medium-high heat, heat olive



APRICOT-PECAN COUSCOUS HAS LOTS OF COMPLEX CARBOHYDRATES AND FIBER.

- oil. Mix in onion, apricots, garlic, coriander, and thyme. Cover and turn heat down to medium-low. Cook about 5 minutes until onions are tender, stirring halfway through cooking time.
2. Meanwhile, in an 8-inch nonstick frying pan over medium-high heat, toast the pecans. Stir constantly for 2 to 3 minutes until nuts are lightly browned. Remove pan immediately from heat to prevent burning; set aside.
3. Stir chicken broth and salt into the onion mixture. Raise heat to medium-high and bring liquid to a boil. Remove pan from heat.
4. Stir in the couscous and toasted pecans. Cover and let stand for 5 minutes until the couscous is hydrated. Fluff with a fork

Invent your Own Couscous Creation

PREP AND COOK TIME: 10 to 15 minutes

NOTES: Any combination you create can be made up to 2 days in advance, or frozen in an airtight container or freezer bag for up to 2 months. Defrost and reheat in the microwave in a covered casserole.

MAKES: 1, 2, or 5 1-cup servings

1. In a medium-size pan or in a microwave-safe bowl, combine your choice of liquid, fat, and herbs if desired. Bring to a boil on the stove, or in your microwave at full power (100%).
2. If using vegetables or fruit, add them just as liquid boils. Bring back up to a boil, then remove pot or bowl from heat source.
3. Stir in condiments and nuts, then couscous. Cover and let stand until all the liquid is absorbed, about 5 minutes. Fluff with a fork and serve.

Servings	1	2	About 5
LIQUIDS <i>Choose one or a combination.</i>	1/2 cup	1 cup	2 1/4 cups
· Canned chicken, beef, or vegetable broth; fruit or vegetable juice; white wine or sherry; tomato or pasta sauce			
FAT <i>(helps separate the couscous grains)</i>	3/4 teaspoon	1 1/2 teaspoons	1 tablespoon
· Safeway SELECT Verdi Extra-Virgin Olive Oil or butter			
INSTANT COUSCOUS	1/3 cup	3/4 cup	1 1/3 cups (10 oz.)
· Uncooked, plain or pre-seasoned			
Optional Ingredients <i>Choose one or a combination from each of the following categories.</i>			
DRIED OR FRESH HERBS AND SEASONINGS			
Dried	1/4 teaspoon	1/2 teaspoon	1 1/4 teaspoon
Fresh	1/2 teaspoon	1 teaspoon	2 1/2 teaspoon
· Basil, oregano, chives, thyme, marjoram, rosemary, coriander, cumin, ginger, onion powder, garlic powder, chili powder, blends like seasoning salt, etc.			
VEGGIES AND/OR FRUIT	1/2 cup	1 cup	2 1/2 cups
· Fresh veggies: diced bell pepper, carrot, celery, baby bok choy, zucchini; bite-sized fresh broccoli or cauliflower florets			
· Fresh fruit: cored, diced, and peeled apple, pear			
· Thawed frozen vegetables: petite peas, corn kernels, carrots, green beans			
· Canned and drained vegetables: mushrooms, corn, beans, water-packed artichoke hearts			
CONDIMENTS	1 to 2 teaspoons	2 to 3 teaspoons	2 tablespoons
· Sliced olives, canned diced pimientos, pesto sauce, oil-packed sundried tomatoes, capers			
TOASTED NUTS	1 tablespoon	2 tablespoons	1/4 to 1/2 cup
· Pine nuts, walnuts, pecans, pistachios			

and sprinkle with chopped parsley before serving.

Per serving: 371 cal., 26% (95 cal.) from fat; 13 g protein; 11 g fat (1.0 g sat.); 57 g carbo (4.2 g fiber); 277 mg sodium; 0 mg chol.

GREEK COUSCOUS-AND-CHICKPEA-STUFFED PEPPERS

PREP AND COOK TIME: 45 minutes

NOTES: Peppers and sauce can be made up to 2 days in advance. Reheat separately in the microwave before serving.

If you have a pressure cooker, peppers take just 15 minutes. After Step 2, fill peppers with filling. Add 1 cup water to bottom of cooker, place peppers on trivet; cover. Bring up to full pressure, turn down heat to stabilize pressure; cook for 4 more minutes.

MAKES: 4 main-dish or 6 side-dish servings

Peppers and Filling

- 4 large (5 to 6 oz.) or 6 small (4 to 5 oz.) bell peppers (red, green, orange, yellow, or a combination)
- 2 cans (8 oz. each) tomato purée
- 1 can (8 3/4 oz.) garbanzo beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh oregano, or 1 teaspoon dried
- 2 tablespoons thinly sliced green onion
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon finely chopped or puréed fresh garlic
- 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice, or frozen
- 1/3 cup (about 20) pitted and sliced calamata olives
- 4 ounces crumbled feta cheese
- 1 cup plain couscous, uncooked

Greek Flavors Sauce

- 1 jar (26 oz.) Safeway SELECT Spicy Bell Pepper Sauce
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon

- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh oregano, or 1 teaspoon dried
- 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice

1. Carefully cut the top off of each pepper and discard stem. Pull out seeds and membranes. If peppers do not easily stand up, carefully slice off a very thin piece from the bottom of each pepper and discard. Chop reserved pepper tops into bite-sized pieces.
2. In a large bowl, mix chopped pepper tops, tomato purée, garbanzo beans, oregano, onion, cinnamon, garlic, lemon juice, olives, cheese, and couscous.
3. Preheat oven to 375°. Add 3 1/2 quarts water to a 5-quart pan; bring to a boil. Immerse peppers in the boiling water for 5 minutes, cooking until peppers are slightly softened yet still brightly colored. Remove peppers from water. Place in a large colander and rinse under cool running water to stop the cooking. Drain peppers upside down in the colander until cool to touch. Divide the couscous filling evenly among the peppers, stuffing them carefully with a spoon. Stand the filled peppers in a 5-quart casserole with a lid. Bake covered for 20 minutes; remove cover and bake for 5 more minutes.
4. While peppers are cooking, in a microwave-safe 1- to 2-quart casserole or pan with a lid, combine bell pepper sauce, cinnamon, oregano, and lemon juice. In the microwave, covered, on full power (100%) for 5 minutes, or over high heat, heat until piping hot.
5. To serve, spoon some sauce on each plate and place one stuffed pepper in the middle of the sauce. Spoon more sauce over the pepper and serve immediately.

Per serving: 470 cal., 23% (110 cal.) from fat; 16 g protein; 12 g fat (4.7 g sat.); 75 g carbo (8.3 g fiber); 1,913 mg sodium; 25 mg chol.

by HOLLY RUDIN-BRASCHI