

Salt and Serenity

Roasted Butternut Squash and Israeli Couscous Salad

This is delicious warm or at room temperature. It still tastes amazing the next day if there are any leftovers, although I doubt it.

Serves 4-6 as a side dish

1 large butternut squash, peeled, seeded and diced into 1/4 inch pieces (You will get about 5-6 cups of diced squash)

4 sprigs fresh thyme, leaves stripped from stems

3 Tablespoons olive oil

2 teaspoons kosher salt

1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

1 cup Israeli couscous

1 Tablespoon kosher salt

2 Tablespoons sherry or red wine vinegar

1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil

135 grams arugula (about 6 cups)

1/4 cup hazelnuts, toasted, skinned and coarsely chopped* (see note below)

1. Preheat oven to 375°F. Place butternut squash in large mixing bowl and toss with thyme leaves, 3 tablespoons olive oil, 2 teaspoons salt and 1/4 teaspoon pepper. Spread squash out onto 2 rimmed baking sheets so that it has lots of room to get browned. Bake for 50-60 minutes until squash is golden brown and a bit crispy. Remove from oven and set aside.
2. While squash is roasting, bring 8 cups of water to a boil. Once boiling, add 1 Tablespoon salt and couscous. Boil for about 10-12 minutes, until tender but not mushy, they should still have some chew to them. Drain and spread out on a baking sheet to cool slightly.
3. In a large mixing bowl, toss squash and couscous with vinegar and 1/4 cup olive oil. Gently mix in arugula. Taste and add additional salt and pepper if needed. If it seems too dry to you, add a bit more olive oil.
4. Transfer to serving bowl and scatter toasted hazelnuts over the top. Serve.

*Toasting hazelnuts:

1. Preheat oven to 325°F. Place the hazelnuts on a baking sheet and roast in the oven for 10 to 15 minutes until they are fragrant. Place toasted hazelnuts into a Tupperware container and secure lid tightly. Shake the container vigorously for a few minutes. This will loosen the skins. Open the container, remove skinned hazelnuts and discard skins. Let hazelnuts cool completely and then coarsely chop nuts and set aside.