

Winter Crunch and Wheat Berry Salad

Serves 4-6

Coarse Breadcrumbs:

6 ounces (about ½ a loaf) of good quality artisan bread (like sourdough), cut into 1-inch cubes

3 Tablespoons extra virgin olive oil

1 teaspoon kosher salt

Salad:

1½ cups wheat berries, rinsed

3 cups water

2 teaspoons kosher salt

1 bunch (about 10 large leaves) Lacinato kale (also known as black kale, Tuscan kale or dinosaur kale)

3 cups Brussels sprouts

4 green onions, washed and sliced thinly, on the diagonal

1 cup sugar snap peas, thinly sliced on the diagonal

½ cup loosely packed mint leaves, washed and coarsely chopped

½ cup loosely packed Italian parsley leaves, washed and coarsely chopped

1 large Honeycrisp apple, washed, cored and thinly sliced into half moons

4 ounces Pecorino Romano cheese, thinly sliced with a vegetable peeler

½ cup walnut halves, toasted and coarsely chopped

Dressing:

¼ cup apple cider vinegar

1 teaspoon Dijon mustard

1 teaspoon honey

½ teaspoon kosher salt

¼ teaspoon black pepper

½ cup extra-virgin olive oil

1. In a medium saucepan, bring water and salt to a boil over high heat. Add wheat berries, stir, cover and simmer over low heat until wheat berries are tender, but still chewy, about 30-40 minutes. Remove from heat and drain any excess water. Spread out wheat berries on a baking sheet to cool. Set aside. Grains can be made ahead and refrigerated for several days.
2. Preheat oven to 350°F. On a rimmed baking sheet, toss bread with olive oil and salt. Bake croutons for 12-14 minutes until well browned and crunchy. Let breadcrumbs cool, transfer to a zip-loc bag and using a rolling pin or your hands, bash croutons until you have coarse crumbs. Don't make fine breadcrumbs, you want lots of little crunchy craggy bits. These can be made ahead and stored in an airtight container at room temperature for several weeks. They are very delicious on soup too!

3. Wash kale leaves, strip the leaves off the stems and stack them up, in a pile, on top of each other. Roll the stack of leaves, like a cigar. Hold the "cigar" with your non-cutting hand, and using a sharp knife in your other hand, thinly slice kale into very fine strips. Place sliced kale in large mixing bowl.
4. Cut ends off the Brussels sprouts and halve them vertically. Cut stem off Brussels sprouts and cut each one in half lengthwise. Slice each half into thin strips. You could also slice sprouts with the slicing blade of the food processor. Add sliced sprouts to bowl with kale.
5. Add green onions, sugar snaps, mint, parsley, apple and cheese to bowl and set aside.
6. In a small jar, add vinegar, Dijon, honey, salt and pepper. Put on lid and shake well. Add olive oil, shake jar again until well emulsified.
7. Add half the dressing to the salad and toss well. Taste and add additional dressing and salt and pepper to taste. Transfer salad to serving bowl or platter. Just before serving top with toasted walnuts and coarse breadcrumbs.

Leftover salad is even more delicious the next day.