

Israeli Couscous Salad

Since I work at home, I rarely eat out for lunch. Depending on how busy I am, sometimes lunch is nothing more than a few crackers, some cheese, and fruit. It could also be a full meal.

Sometimes, like with this recipe, I just make something out of odds and ends in my fridge. It doesn't always work, but in this case it did.

After scanning my fridge, I had the following: roasted mixed veggies from last night's dinner, some fresh herbs that needed used or thrown out now, and some cooked lentils from a soup I made a couple days ago.

I needed something to tie it all together, so I checked the pantry. Dried fruit? Okay. A grain. Brown rice? Nah, takes too long to cook. How about Israeli couscous? Cooks in less than 10 minutes. Perfect.

If you've never had Israeli couscous, it's got a kind of chewy, pasta like texture. Also like pasta, it goes with almost anything, so throw some in a stir-fry or soup, or eat it on the side of your favorite protein instead of rice.

For a dressing, I combined some Ava Jane's Kitchen extra-virgin avocado oil, lemon juice, a splash of cider vinegar, mustard, and some spices. Tossed it all in a bowl, and I had a gourmet tasting lunch in less than 15 minutes, for a fraction of the cost of takeout. To make it extra fast, just roast up a big batch of veggies for dinner and save half for lunch the next day.

I might make this again for dinner and leave out the lentils, but add grilled fish. It would make a perfect summer side dish, especially if you used whatever vegetables are in season.

Ingredients:

Salad:

- 1 bell pepper, diced
- 1 red onion, diced
- 1 zucchini, diced
- 1 carrot, diced
- 2 tablespoons Ava Jane's Kitchen extra-virgin avocado oil
- 1/2 cup Israeli couscous
- 3/4 cup broth or water
- 1/2 cup cooked lentils
- 1/4 cup dried fruit (raisins, apricots, cranberries)
- 1 small bunch parsley, chopped
- 1 small bunch fresh mint, chopped

1 small bunch chives, chopped

Dressing:

1/4 cup Ava Jane's Kitchen extra-virgin avocado oil

Juice of 1 lemon

1 teaspoon apple cider vinegar

1/2 teaspoon Dijon mustard

1 teaspoon honey

1 clove garlic, minced

1 teaspoon ground coriander

1/2 teaspoon ground cumin

1/2 teaspoon sea salt

1/2 teaspoon fresh ground black pepper

Directions:

Preheat oven to 400 degrees F.

Toss the vegetables with the avocado oil and a pinch of salt and lay on a baking sheet.

Roast for 20-30 minutes, until browned and tender. Remove and cool.

While the veggies are roasting, put the couscous and broth in a medium saucepan, bring to a boil, cover and reduce to a simmer. Simmer for 10 minutes.

Put the veggies, couscous, lentils, dried fruit, and herbs in a large bowl. Put the dressing ingredients in a jar and shake until well combined. Toss with the salad. Chill if desired, or serve at room temperature.