



Wheat berry, Dried Cranberries, & Goat Cheese Salad

A change from rice or pasta, this simple wheat berry salad has a delicious nutty flavor. For a quick dinner, prepare the wheat berries in a Crock Pot so they will be ready to use when you start dinner. They can also be made in advance and stored in the refrigerator for up to two days.

- 1 lb. red winter wheat berries, rinsed and soaked for several hours or overnight in water to cover
- 1 large red onion, diced
- 3 large carrots, diced
- 8 mushrooms, diced
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 cup dried cranberries
- 4 ounces goat cheese (optional)
- Salt and pepper

Mustard Vinaigrette:

- 3 shallots or 2 tbs chopped onion
- 1/2 cup red wine vinegar
- 3 tablespoons honey
- 3 tablespoons grain mustard
- Pinch salt
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh rosemary or thyme
- 1 cup olive oil

Place the wheat berries and their soaking water in a large pot. Bring to a boil. Reduce the heat, cover and simmer one hour or until the grains are tender and beginning to splay. Turn off the heat, and allow the wheat berries to sit in the hot water for another 15 minutes. Drain and chill. Sauté the onion, carrots, and mushrooms in the olive oil. When vegetables are soft, mix with cooked wheat berries.

Prepare the vinaigrette by placing all the ingredients except oil in food processor or blender. Slowly whisk oil into the blended ingredients. Add dried cranberries and vinaigrette to the wheat berries, toss, and top with goat cheese if desired. Salt and pepper to taste. *Yield: 8 to 10 servings*

Healthy Habits That Taste Great!

With the dawning of the New Year, many of us resolve to eat better, exercise more, and pay attention to our health. Often referred to as the contemplation stage in behavioral modification, it's a point when we recognize that there is something we would like to change, but we're just not ready yet to take the plunge. Real change, when behaviors become habits, those natural actions we perform without even thinking about them, like turning on the coffee pot in the morning or leaving your keys on the hook, happen over time. Just realizing the importance of actually making those changes, however, is an important first step.

To move from the contemplation stage to the action, just try dipping your toe in the water. Make small changes at first, set realistic short term goals, and start establishing routines. For exercise, if you feel you can't find a half hour every day to workout, start by finding 10 minutes then work your way up. Wear a pedometer to track your movement, and make a concerted effort to take the stairs or walk to do errands. For better nutrition, replace unhealthy snack foods in your home with fruits and vegetables, plan at least three meals for the week in advance, and start gathering quick easy recipes for your new go-to list so you don't get dragged back into unhealthy dinner time standbys.

There is still debate over how long it takes for a behavior to become a habit, but the general consensus is around four to eight weeks of consistency for a change to become ingrained. After six months the habit will become so much a part of your life you'll find that if you skip it, you'll actually miss it. Those that complain when they miss their morning green Smoothy or daily run just might not be that crazy after all.

Black Bean & Vegetable Quesadillas

- 1 small onion
- 1 clove fresh garlic, crushed
- Two handfuls leafy green vegetables (spinach, kale, Swiss chard)
- 1/2 red pepper
- Small hot pepper such as jalapeno (optional)
- 1 cup canned or frozen corn
- 1 15-ounce can black beans, rinsed
- 1/2 cup shredded cheese (Mexican queso, pepper jack, cheddar)
- 6 8-inch whole-wheat tortillas
- 1 teaspoon canola oil

Optional toppings:

1 ripe avocado, diced, 1/2 cup prepared fresh salsa

In a pan sauté chopped onion in 1 tbs. oil. Add garlic and red pepper(s) and continue to cook for another minute. If corn is frozen, add now, if canned, add after the greens. Add greens, cook for an additional two minutes. Add black beans and sauté just to warm.

Remove from heat. Wipe pan with oil, and heat on stove. Place tortilla in pan and sprinkle with a little cheese. Add bean and vegetable mixture, and top with another sprinkle of cheese and the second tortilla. Using a spatula, flip to brown both sides. You can also use only one tortilla, place the filling on one side, and fold it in half. This recipe is very flexible as you can substitute any kind of bean, vegetable, or cheese you have on hand. You can even substitute brown rice for the tortilla. The vegetable mixture can be made in advance and kept in the refrigerator for up to 3 days.

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