

Lentil & Bulgur Salad

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Herewith a lentil salad that's got some East Mediterranean Meets West Mediterranean style to it. This was something I threw together recently for some visiting MoCoolers. I thought it was pretty good, and now that I've made it again, I like it just as much. It's relatively wine friendly, incredibly easy to make, and is quite good in the protein department for us anemic vegetarians.

- 1-1/2 c French green lentils (like Lentilles de Puy)
- 5 c unsalted water
- 1-1/2 c dried bulgur (medium to coarse)
- 1-1/2 c boiling roasted vegetable stock
- 1 large (or two medium) red onion
- 1-1/2 c chopped Italian parsley (not packed)
- 1/3 c sweet red wine vinegar (see note below)
- 1/2 c Extra Virgin olive oil, or more to taste
- pepper
- salt
- 1 lemon

Boil the lentils in the unsalted water for 20 minutes or until al dente. Drain and allow to partially cool; you can reserve the lentil water to add to stocks for earthiness and body. Put the bulgur in a bowl, add the boiling stock, then cover and let sit for 30 minutes.

Peel and dice the onion. I like the dice to be 6 mm or so, but this is a textural element you can play with. In a large bowl, toss together the lentils, the bulgur, the onion, and the parsley with the red wine vinegar and the oil.

Squeeze the lemon and toss the juice in, along with a few healthy pinches of pepper. Mix well. Taste and adjust salt; there should be enough of the vinegar to be a barely discernible sweet-and-sour element, but it should be just an accent to the earthiness of the salad ingredients. Add more olive oil if you want to pump up the richness.

Let the salad sit, covered, for at least an hour, then serve in a large bowl, family style.

Note on the vinegar: I used a product called Chateau St. Julien Red Wine Vinegar, in honor of the visitors from Michigan. It's basically a light red wine vinegar tempered with some red wine, white grape juice, and sugar.

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