

RV GODDESS: Farro Salad

Farro, an ancient grain, is regaining popularity due to its nutty flavor and considerable health benefits from consuming whole grains. Farro fed the Mediterranean for eons, and evidence of farro cultivation has been discovered in what is now Turkey, Syria and Israel dating back thousands of years. Farro (*triticum dicoccum*) is also known as Tuscany Emmer and (incorrectly) emmer wheat. If you cannot find farro for this recipe, substitute barley.

My farro salad is fresh-tasting and pairs well with spicy grilled meats. Though the salad takes a bit of time to prepare (the farro needs to be soaked before boiling), it can be made ahead and kept refrigerated - great for a picnic or weekend in the RV - and it holds up well. The recipe can be easily adapted to a vegan diet by omitting the feta. Note: farro is closely related to durum wheat, so should not be consumed if you have wheat allergies or are avoiding gluten.

DRESSING:

1/3 cup best-quality extra-virgin olive oil
zest of one lemon
juice of one lemon
½ teaspoon kosher salt
½ teaspoon (or to taste) black pepper

SALAD:

One pound farro
½ teaspoon kosher salt
1 cup frozen peas (do not thaw)
8 ounces feta cheese, crumbled
1/3 cup pine nuts
3 Tablespoons finely minced fresh mint leaves (from 3-4 stems of fresh mint)

Soak the farro in water for 30 minutes. Drain and rinse.

Prepare the dressing while the farro soaks: Place the olive oil, lemon zest and juice, salt and pepper in a small bowl and blend with a wire whisk. Set aside.

Place soaked farro in a large pot (it will nearly triple in volume), cover with 2 quarts of water, add ½ teaspoon of salt to the water and bring to a boil. Let the farro boil for 25 to 30 minutes until cooked through. The farro should still be firm, but not crunchy. Drain, but do not rinse. Transfer hot farro to a large serving bowl. Add the frozen peas, pour the dressing over and stir well to coat. Refrigerate until chilled, about 90 minutes.

Toss the dressed farro with the feta cheese, pine nuts and minced mint before serving. Garnish with additional mint sprigs, if desired.

Serves 12 or more as a side dish, eight as a main course.