

Nebraska 4-H / Nebraska State Fair

Peter Dale

The National, Seabear Oyster Bar, Condor Chocolates

Wheat Berries with Tomato, Fresh Corn and Pickles

A wheat berry is the entire wheat kernel, except for the hull. There's lots of fiber and protein packed into these grains, along with B Vitamins.

Soaking wheat berries overnight not only produces a faster cook time, it also makes them easier to digest and allows your body to better access vitamins and minerals. I encourage home cooks to experiment and add a variety of ingredients to their wheat berry salads.

Serves 4 as a side dish

Ingredients:

1 1/2 cups hard wheat berries

1 cup tomato, diced

1 cup fresh corn, cut off the cob

½ cup pickles, diced (use your favorite pickle, and not just cucumber)

¼ cup flat leaf parsley, roughly chopped

2 tablespoons lemon juice

2 tablespoons olive oil

kosher salt

freshly ground black pepper

1. In a large pot, add wheat berries and enough water to cover by 2 inches. Soak overnight, at least 10 hours.
2. Drain the wheat berries. Return them to the pot and again cover with water by 2 inches. Bring to a boil over medium heat and cook for 1 hour uncovered. The wheat berries should be chewy but not tough. Drain the wheat berries and cool.
3. In a large toss bowl, combine wheat berries, tomato, corn, pickles, parsley, olive oil and lemon. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Serve right away or pack away for a picnic (in a park or at your desk).

Happy Carrot Salad with Golden Raisins

*adapted from Leon

I first had this at the veggie-centric eatery, Leon, in London. It has been an on-again-off-again staple of our power lunch at The National for years.

Serves 4 as a side dish

Ingredients:

2 tablespoons golden raisins (regular raisins will work just fine, and so will craisins)
3 large carrots, grated
1 clove garlic, minced
1 tablespoon sesame, freshly toasted
2 scallions, greens and whites, finely diced
1 tablespoon cilantro, roughly chopped
1 tablespoon mint, roughly chopped
½ teaspoon red chili flake (add more if you like more kick)
2 tablespoons lemon juice
2 tablespoons olive oil
kosher salt
freshly ground black pepper

1. Soak the golden raisins in hot water for 5 minutes until plump. Drain and cool.
2. In a large toss bowl, combine the raisins, carrot, garlic, sesame, scallion, cilantro, mint and chili flake. Toss well.
3. Just before serving add the lemon juice and olive oil. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

Basic Vinaigrette

Use this as a building block, add your favorite ingredients to customize your vinaigrette: chopped tomatoes, ginger and sesame, even diced dill pickle.

Ingredients:

3 tablespoons red wine vinegar

1 garlic clove, minced

1 teaspoon Dijon mustard

Kosher salt

Pepper

3/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil

1. In a pint-size jar, combine the vinegar, garlic, mustard, 3/4 teaspoon of salt and 1/2 teaspoon of pepper
2. Cover and shake to dissolve the salt.
3. Add the olive oil and shake to blend. Taste for seasoning.

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Romesco

A classic sauce from the Catalan region of Spain, romesco was originally served with grilled onions. Beyond onions, romesco is delicious with grilled meats, vegetables of all kinds, and even as a dip for bread.

Ingredients:

1 cup roasted red bell pepper, peeled and seeded

8 cloves roasted garlic

4 slow-roasted tomatoes (8 halves)

1 tablespoon sherry vinegar (or red wine vinegar)

1/2 cup olive oil

1/3 cup toasted almonds (toasted in a 350 oven until deeply browned)

Salt to taste

Black pepper to taste

1. Combine all ingredients in a blender or food processor and puree until smooth. Season to taste.

Chimichurri

Chimichurri is THE steak sauce in beef obsessed Argentina. There are as many recipes for chimichurri as there are Argentine heads of cattle. Give this one a try but feel free to tweak it to your liking. Chimichurri is not just for steaks, spoon it over chicken, or fold into sour cream or mayo for an exciting dip or spread.

1 cup (packed) fresh Italian parsley
1/2 cup olive oil
1/3 cup red wine vinegar
1/4 cup (packed) fresh cilantro
2 garlic cloves, peeled
3/4 teaspoon dried crushed red pepper
1/2 teaspoon ground cumin
1/2 teaspoon salt

1. Puree all ingredients in food processor. Transfer to bowl. Can be made 2 hours ahead. Cover and let stand at room temperature.