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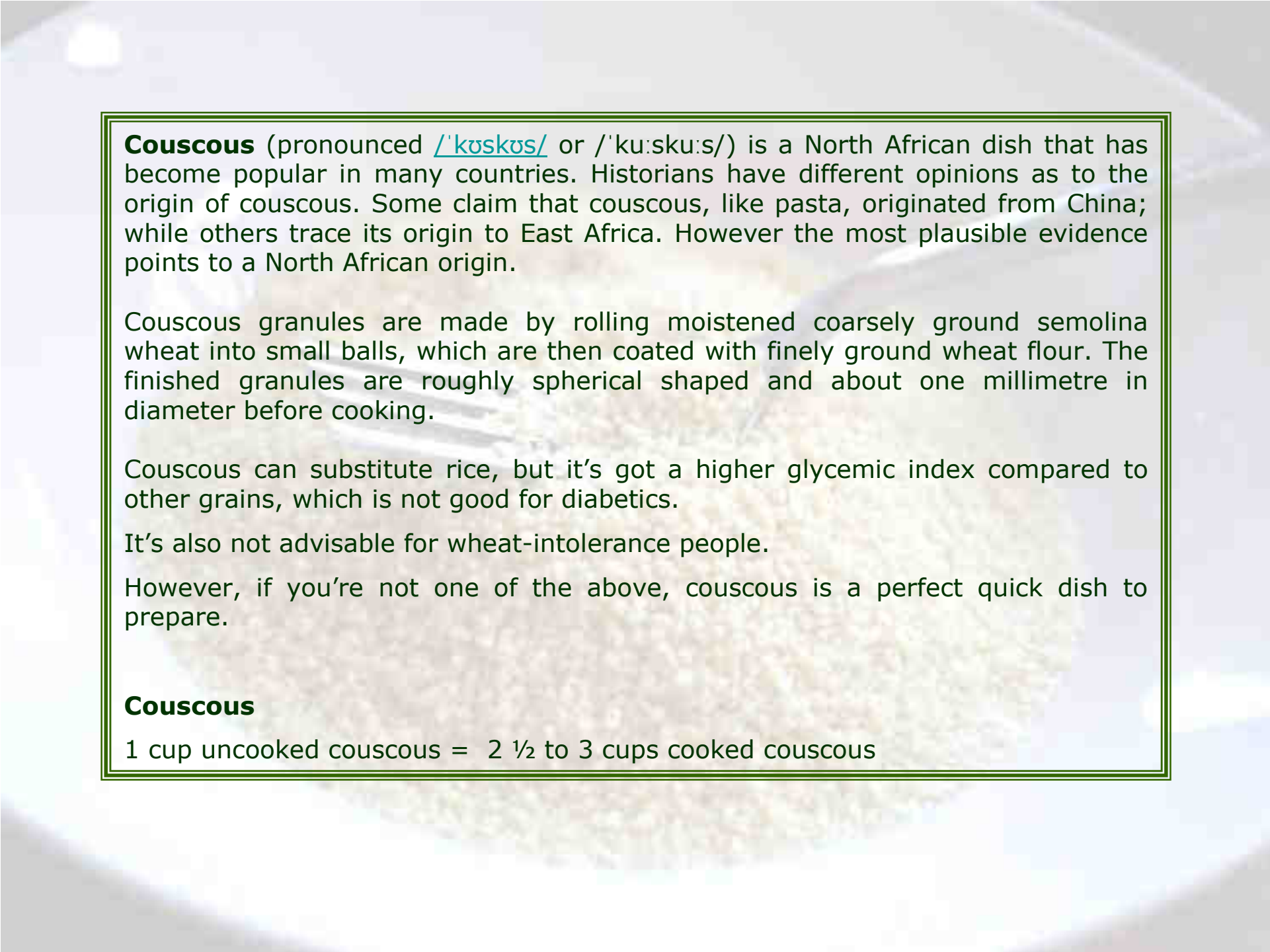
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XCentric Ideas



Couscous (pronounced [/ˈkʊskʊs/](#) or [/ˈkuːskuːs/](#)) is a North African dish that has become popular in many countries. Historians have different opinions as to the origin of couscous. Some claim that couscous, like pasta, originated from China; while others trace its origin to East Africa. However the most plausible evidence points to a North African origin.

Couscous granules are made by rolling moistened coarsely ground semolina wheat into small balls, which are then coated with finely ground wheat flour. The finished granules are roughly spherical shaped and about one millimetre in diameter before cooking.

Couscous can substitute rice, but it's got a higher glycemic index compared to other grains, which is not good for diabetics.

It's also not advisable for wheat-intolerance people.

However, if you're not one of the above, couscous is a perfect quick dish to prepare.

Couscous

1 cup uncooked couscous = 2 ½ to 3 cups cooked couscous

Breakfast Couscous Quiche

3 eggs, hard boiled, sliced
½ packed cubed bacon (optional)
2 onions, sliced or diced
2 cups cooked couscous*
3 eggs
125 ml (½ cup) milk
1 cup cheddar cheese, grated
black pepper, herbs, salt

Fry the bacon & onions. Beat the eggs & milk, add the bacon mixture and all the rest of the ingredients.

Spoon into a pie dish, microwave uncovered at High (100%) for 8-10 min, till centre is set. Or at 180oC for 15-20 min till centre is set.

*I used Red peppers, citrus peel & chilli-flavored couscous.



Rosemary Couscous Bread



2 to 2 1/8 cup cooked couscous
2 cups white whole wheat flour/cake flour
2 1/2 tbsp baking powder*
2 tsp dried rosemary (*I used fresh ones*)
1 tsp salt
1/2 cup vegetable oil (*I used olive oil*)
1 1/2 cup soy milk (*I used skim milk*)

Preheat oven to 350 oF (180 oC).

Mix dry ingredients in a medium bowl. Then add oil and milk into the centre and incorporate wet into dry. Pour into a medium glass/ceramic rectangular pan sprayed with cooking spray. *I used a square cake tin.*

Bake for 45-50 minutes.

**That's why my bread didn't rise – I used tsp not tbsp!!!! But it had a lovely taste!!!*

Tomato Couscous Soup

¼ cup chopped onion
1 garlic clove, minced
2 tsp olive oil
1 ½ cups chicken *or* vegetable stock
2 medium tomatoes, chopped finely
1 tsp fresh oregano *or* ¼ tsp dried oregano
3 tbsp uncooked couscous
1 tbsp All gold tomato sauce
1/8 tsp salt (*be careful – stock is already salty*)



In a large saucepan, sauté onion and garlic in oil until tender. Add the stock, tomatoes, tomato sauce and oregano. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat; cover and simmer for 20-25 minutes or until tomatoes are tender. Remove from the heat, puree.

Stir in the couscous and, if necessary, salt. Let stand for 5 minutes.

You can use more liquid if you want it more liquidly.

Apricot and Nut Stuffing



750 g couscous, cooked
200 g pine kernels / walnuts, chopped
250 g dried apricots, chopped
125 ml chopped parsley
45 ml chopped fresh mint
30 ml crushed garlic
15 ml chopped fresh ginger
150 ml orange juice
salt and milled black pepper to taste

Mix all the ingredients and refrigerate until ready to use.

Use it as a stuffing for:

Whole chicken, baby cabbage, steamed peppers, hollowed out tomatoes, big mushrooms, halved butternut, halved squash, etc.

Beetroot, Spinach & Cheese Salad

140g uncooked couscous
zest and juice 1 large orange*
25g walnut pieces
85g firm goat's cheese , crumbled*
6 dried apricots, roughly chopped
4 small cooked beetroot, quartered
2 handfuls spinach leaves
100 ml water

FOR THE DRESSING

2 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
½ lemon, juice



Put the orange zest, juice and 100ml water in a small pan and bring to the boil. Place the couscous in a medium bowl and pour the hot liquid over. Mix well, then cover and leave to absorb for 5 minutes. Fluff up the grains with a fork, then add the walnuts, cheese, apricots, beetroot and seasoning.

Mix the oil and lemon juice (or use your favourite bought vinaigrette), then toss well. Pack in a sealed container, with the spinach sat on top (it won't go soggy when layered up this way). When ready to eat, toss the spinach through.

*I used a grapefruit. *I used Cheddar cheese.

One-Pan Chicken Couscous



1 tbsp olive oil
1 onion, thinly sliced
200g chicken breasts, diced *
good chunk fresh root ginger
1-2 tbsp Harissa (chilli) paste
10 dried apricots
220g can chickpeas, drained, rinsed
200g uncooked couscous
200ml hot chicken stock
handful coriander, chopped, to serve

Heat the olive oil in a large frying pan and cook the onion for 1-2 mins just until softened. Add the chicken and fry for 7-10 mins until thoroughly cooked through and the onions have turned golden. Grate over the ginger, stir through the Harissa (chilli paste) to coat everything and cook for 1 min more.

Tip in the apricots, chickpeas and couscous, then pour over the stock and stir once. Cover with a lid or tightly cover the pan with foil and leave for about 5 mins until the couscous has soaked up all the stock and is soft. Fluff up the couscous with a fork and scatter over the coriander to serve. Serve with extra Harissa, if you like.

**I used chicken pieces.*

Lamb, Couscous & Kidney Bean Pot

1 onion, sliced
2 tbsp oil
1 packet beef cubes
1 tin tomatoes
1 tin tomato paste
1 tin kidney beans, drained
2/3 cup uncooked couscous
Herbs & spices
Baby spinach leaves



Heat the oil in a large frying pan and cook the onion for 1-2 mins just until softened. Add the beef cubes and fry till nicely browned.

Add the tomatoes, tomato paste, herbs, spices & kidney beans and let it simmer for 20-30 minutes. Remove from the heat, add the couscous, stir through, put lid on and let it stand for 5 minutes.

Serve on a bed of baby spinach leaves.

Dried Fruit & Nuts Couscous Snack



2 1/3 cups water
1/2 cup sugar (*I used brown*)
1/3 cup dried cranberries
1/3 cup dried apricots, chopped
1/3 cup dried cherries, chopped
2 1/2 cups uncooked couscous
1/2 cup coarsely chopped toasted
slivered almonds
1/2 cup coarsely chopped toasted
and skinned hazelnuts *

In a medium saucepan, combine the water, sugar, cranberries, apricots, and cherries. Bring the mixture to a boil over medium-high heat, stirring constantly, until the sugar has dissolved, about 2 minutes. Stir in the couscous and remove the pan from the heat. Cover the pan with a tight fitting lid until the couscous has absorbed all of the cooking liquid, about 5 to 7 minutes.

Using a fork, fluff the couscous to break up any lumps. Add the almonds and hazelnuts and toss. Spread the mixture evenly on a baking sheet until completely cooled, about 10 minutes. Transfer the couscous snack to an airtight container and store in the refrigerator.

**I used chopped walnuts.*

Chocolate Couscous Frosting

You can use anything really:

100g blueberry & nut choc slab
6 heaped tbsp cooked couscous
1 tin black cherries, drained,
squashed (or any other berries)
2 tbsp butter, melted
1 tbsp fruit syrup (optional)



Mix the couscous & cherries/berries. Melt the chocolate, add immediately to the mixture, stir, add the butter & syrup. Pour into a dish and chill. Spread on cooled cake.

**I just wanted to play around with the couscous. It came out very nice and tasted lovely with this chocolate cake. You should see the reaction when you confess to the couscous.*