



*This recipe is a blueprint for couscous of many flavors. Try this version, which uses fresh peas and pine nuts. Once you know the basics, you can create your own couscous combinations using the veggies, fruits, nuts, and spices of your choice. I've added bonus recipes at the bottom of the page.*

### **Crazy for Couscous**

I found a terrific couscous online at Zingermans.com. It is called M'hamsa Couscous, and it comes from Tebourba, Tunisia. It is semolina flour mixed with olive oil, water and salt (yes, the components of pasta), hand-rolled into little balls, and then sun-dried. Couscous is, in fact, a pasta, although it is often mistaken for a seed or grain. Aside from its excellent taste, the texture of this particular couscous stands out. The size of the little balls falls somewhere in between the size of tiny Moroccan couscous and the much larger Israeli couscous. It achieves both a creaminess and a "pop" when it's eaten. I like this product so much that there are 14 jars of it in my pantry. That's because I've never seen this couscous anywhere but Zingermans.com, and products often rotate in and out of their catalogue. I'm not taking any chances with my supply.

This is the easiest recipe you'll find on my website. I'm not sure it even counts as cooking. Serves 4.

### **Ingredients**

- 1 ½ cups of couscous
- 2 cups of low sodium chicken stock
- 1 cup of fresh peas (or frozen peas, thawed)
- ¼ cup of pine nuts
- 1 Tablespoon extra virgin olive oil

Bring the chicken stock to a boil in a sauce pan that has a lid. Once the stock boils, add the couscous, and give it a stir. Let it boil for one minute, then take the pot off of the heat. Don't stir! Pour the peas and pine nuts on top of the stock/couscous mixture, put the lid on the pot, and let it sit for 10 minutes.

The steam will warm the peas and pine nuts. The couscous will absorb all of the chicken stock.

After 10 minutes, add the olive oil. Use a fork to fluff the couscous (just like you would rice) and mix the peas, pine nuts, and olive oil throughout the pot. That's it!

I purposely did not add any salt to the couscous while it cooked or steamed. Salt to taste as you serve. I often find the salt unnecessary.

Even though I highly recommend the M'hamsa couscous, you could just as well make this recipe with the Moroccan couscous that is available in most grocery stores. Look where pasta and rice are sold, or the international / Middle East aisle.

My family greatly enjoyed this dish alongside grilled lamb chops. The chops were marinated in olive oil, 6 cloves of minced garlic, and ¼ cup of fresh thyme, roughly chopped.

**Bonus Recipe:** We also like another version that we serve with spicy shrimp. Follow the same process, but instead of peas and pine nuts, use orange, fresh ginger, and slivered almonds. Bring the stock to a boil, then add the couscous, a few orange slices including the rind, and a tablespoon or two of minced ginger (to taste). In this case, I do add the orange and ginger to the stock at the outset so that they flavor the liquid. Boil for 1 minute, take the pot off the heat, add the slivered almonds, cover with a lid for 10 minutes, fluff and serve. (You can fish out the orange pieces.) The couscous picks up the ginger nicely and the orange in the background is a fresh surprise. The almonds provide crunch against the creamy couscous. Give this version a try too, or here's another one: dried cranberries and slivered almonds. The couscous accepts whatever flavors you give it, and once you have the basic pattern down, you can make your own family favorite recipe.

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