



Here's what I love about this dish. It's fast -- maybe 15 minutes from start to finish. The grilled scallions and zucchini add a lovely smoky charred flavor to the couscous. The ratio of veggies to pasta is spot on. Yes, couscous is a pasta, and just look at all of those veggies! The house stays cool and clean-up is a breeze. It's all good!

Veggie Couscous

What to serve with grilled pork chops... hmmm. Ask me, and I'll say, "Grilled vegetables!" I love every kind of vegetable, and when they're grilled, well... that's just spectacular! The trick is to put together a combination that my son will eat too. I've found that while his taste runs to potatoes and corn, he will eat other vegetables if they are small and included in something else. Since it's not soup weather, I decided on a side-dish that meets Matt's criteria and doesn't heat up the house! Veggie couscous! It's the ultimate "barely cooking" dish that takes only 15 minutes. It's packed with fresh ingredients and is substantial enough to satisfy a hungry 18-year old. The minimal clean up also is pretty exciting!

Ingredients (Serves 4)

1 cup couscous (we use a Tunisian couscous)

1 and ¼ cups low sodium chicken broth

2 scallions, grilled

1 cup peas

2 medium carrots, small dice

1 zucchini, grilled, diced

½ cup finely grated parmesan cheese

2 blurps, extra virgin olive oil

Pinch of salt

Clean the carrots. I leave the skin on. Cut into small dice, about the same size as the peas. Have 1 cup of fresh peas, or 1 cup of thawed peas at the ready.

Trim both ends of the scallions. Toss in a tiny bit of olive oil, and grill for 2-3 minutes on indirect heat. Warm through and char lightly. Slice into small bites, and reserve.

Bring the chicken broth to a boil in a medium sauce pan.

Add the peas, carrots, couscous and a pinch of salt. Put the lid on the pot, reduce heat to a simmer, and go with a hard simmer for 1 minute.

Take the pot off the heat. Add 1 teaspoon of olive oil, give the ingredients a quick stir, put the lid back on the pot, and then let the pot sit for 10 minutes.

In the meantime, cut the ends off of the zucchini. Quarter the zucchini long ways, so that you have 4 long pieces that look like steak fries. Toss in a very light drizzle of olive oil and then toss with the parmesan cheese, so that each piece of zucchini has a light coating of cheese. Grill for 3-4 minutes until the zucchini heats through. You want it to remain a bit crisp. When the zucchini is ready, dice it into bite-size pieces.

After the couscous has sat for 10 minutes, add the scallions and zucchini to the pot, and stir everything together. Taste – add a pinch of salt if you wish. It's ready – just like that!

Tips: Don't salt the zucchini before grilling – it will get mushy. If you think your couscous has too much liquid after the 10 minutes, put it back on the stove, uncovered, for 1-2 minutes and let the excess liquid simmer off.

I use Tunisian couscous which is bigger than Moroccan couscous but smaller than Israeli couscous. It's ideal for this dish. If you can't find Tunisian couscous, the larger Israeli version would be the better substitute.

First published by Judy on July 6, 2014