

SOME

KITCHEN STORIES

fiction + food

Warm Farro Salad with Chickpeas, Feta, and Spicy Dressing

source: Orangette | Makes 1 large salad or several small portions

INGREDIENTS

For the farro:

1 cup farro

½ tsp. salt

For the dressing:

3 Tbsp. fish sauce

3 Tbsp. lime juice

2 to 3 Tbsp. (25 to 35 g) brown sugar

6 to 8 Tbsp. water, to taste

1 medium garlic clove, minced or pressed

1 Thai chile, very thinly sliced

For the salad:

Chickpeas, either canned (drained and rinsed) or cooked from dried

Escarole, coarsely chopped or sliced

Radicchio, coarsely sliced

Carrots, sliced into rounds

Feta, coarsely crumbled

DIRECTIONS

Put the farro in a medium (2 ½- to 3-quart) saucepan, add cold water to cover, and set it aside to soak for 30 minutes. Then drain the farro, put it back into the saucepan, and add 3 cups of cold water and ½ teaspoon salt. Bring to a boil; then reduce the heat to maintain a gentle simmer and cook until tender but still a little chewy, about 45 minutes. It's up to you, really, how "done" you want your farro. At 30 minutes, mine is usually too tough, but a few minutes later, it's just right: al dente, but not exhausting to chew. When it's ready, drain it, and either use it while it's warm or transfer it to a storage container for later use. (Covered and chilled, cooked farro will keep for a few days, easy.)

To make the dressing, combine the fish sauce, lime juice, 2 tablespoons of the brown sugar, 6 tablespoons of the water, the garlic, and chile in a small bowl. Whisk well. Taste: if it's too pungent, add more water 1 tablespoon at a time. If you'd like a little more sweetness, add more brown sugar ½ tablespoon at a time. (Covered and chilled, the dressing will keep for three days to a week.)

To assemble a portion of salad, scoop out a couple of large spoonfuls of farro - maybe 1/3 to ½ cup - and put it in a wide bowl. If the farro is cold, you might want to microwave it for 45 seconds or so, to warm it. That's what I do. Or you could put it in a small ovenproof dish, covered, and bake it for a few minutes to warm it. Or you can just leave it cold. Add a large spoonful of chickpeas, a good handful each of escarole and radicchio, and maybe half of a carrot, sliced. Top with a generous amount of feta, and then drizzle some dressing - maybe a tablespoon? Or to taste - over the whole thing. Toss, and eat.