

Tabbouleh

I don't think there is any such thing as a "classic" Middle Eastern tabbouleh since there appear to be as many variations in terms of quantities as there are people. Some use huge amounts of herbs and little bulgur wheat, others do quite the opposite. This version, though, seems to me to capture the essence and generally accepted ingredients but you should feel free to vary the balance to your own liking with gay abandon. This is basically similar to the *Moro* version with the addition of cucumber (which many recipes seem to include).

Many commentators claim that bulgur wheat is ready after only a few minutes soaking in cold water but I haven't yet found one that's ready in less than an hour. Maybe I have never found a truly fine bulgur wheat? Anyway, be prepared for some variability.

Planning

serves:	6 - 8
prep time:	2 hours
cooking time:	n/a

Ingredients

100g bulgur wheat
400g tomatoes, deseeded & finely diced
½ cucumber, deseeded & finely diced
8 spring onions, finely chopped
3 small bunches flat-leaved parsley, roughly chopped
1 small bunch mint, roughly chopped
1 small clove garlic, crushed with salt
¼ tsp ground cinnamon
¼ tsp ground allspice
salt & pepper
2 tbs lemon juice
4 tbs olive oil

Method

Soak the bulgur wheat in cold water until it loses its crunch. I find it takes an hour or so but your wheat may vary so bite it frequently to check how yours is progressing. When it is ready, strain it in through a sieve and leave it until it is reasonably dry and can be fluffed up with a fork.

Make the dressing. Add the garlic, spices, salt & pepper to the lemon juice, then stir in the olive oil.

An hour or so before you are ready to eat, mix together the bulgur wheat, tomatoes, cucumber, spring onions, parsley and mint. Mix the dressing into the salad ensuring that everything is well coated. The hour should allow the flavours to blend without allowing the herbs to wilt too much.

Tabbouleh is traditionally scooped up with lettuce leaves but an interesting alternative is chicory leaves; red chicory if you can find it.