



Spicy Chickpea and Bulgur Soup

Serves 6

2 tbl. olive oil
2 small onions, cut into 3/8 inch dice
4 cloves garlic, crushed
2 large carrots, peeled and cut into 3/8 inch dice
4 celery stalks, cut into 3/8 inch dice
3 tbl. harissa paste
1 tsp. ground cumin
1 tsp. ground coriander
1 ½ tsp. whole caraway seeds
2 ½ cups drained cooked chickpeas (canned are fine)
4-5 cups water
¾ cup coarse bulgur wheat
3 tsp. fine salt, or to taste
black pepper to taste

Creamed Feta Paste

3 ½ oz. feta, broken into large chunks
¼ cup crème fraiche or sour cream
1 cup cilantro leaves, coarsely chopped
½ cup mint leaves
1/8 tsp. fine grain salt

To serve: mint, cilantro and/or celery leaves

Put the oil in a saucepan over medium heat. Add the onions and sauté for 5 minutes, stirring from time to time, until translucent. Add the garlic, carrots, and celery and continue cooking for another 8 minutes. Add the harissa, cumin, coriander, and caraway seeds and cook for a further 2 minutes, stirring well. Gently mix the chickpeas into the vegetable mixture – you don't want them to break down – along with most of the salt and plenty of black pepper. Add most of the water and bring to a boil. Turn down the heat and simmer gently for 10 minutes.

Meanwhile, rinse the bulgur, put in a small saucepan, and cover generously with cold water. Bring to a boil and immediately remove from the heat. Drain, refresh under cold water, drain again and set aside.

To make the feta paste, put the feta, crème fraiche, cilantro, mint, and 1/8 tsp. salt in the bowl of a small food processor and blitz for a couple of minutes, until a smooth, creamy paste forms. Keep in the fridge until needed.

Before serving, add the cooked bulgur to the soup and bring to a gentle simmer. Divide the soup among the bowls, add a spoonful of feta paste to each bowl, top with some herbs, and serve at once.

A few notes - scale back the harissa a bit if you are sensitive to heat (or if your harissa is on the spicy side). Yotam wrote this recipe using bulgur (as you see it below), but because I had cooked farro on hand, I took the liberty of swapping that in, in place of the bulgur. I imagine brown rice could be a welcome substitute too.

Credit – 101 Cookbooks