Pan-Seared Rainbow Trout with Carrot-Cumin Pearl Barley

2 trout fillets, each with half the carrot-and-barley mixture | Active 25 min | Cook 60 min | Total 75 min

Ingredients

- 4 1/4 oz dry pearl barley (120 g)
- 3 cups water for the barley (720 ml/720 g)
- 2 medium carrots, peeled into thin ribbons (200 g prepared)
- 2 boneless skinless farmed rainbow trout fillets, about 5 1/3 oz/150 g each (300 g raw edible fish)
- 4 teaspoons olive oil (20 ml/18 g), divided
- 2 small garlic cloves, minced (6 g)
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cumin (1 g)
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice (30 ml/30 g), divided
- A small handful fresh parsley, chopped (8 g)
- About 1/3 teaspoon fine salt (2 g), divided
- 1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper (0.5 g)

Set out

Kitchen scale and vegetable peeler, Lidded 3 qt/3 liter saucepan and fine colander, 12-inch/30 cm nonstick or well-seasoned skillet, Broad fish slice, clean board and thin-tip food thermometer

Allergens

Fish (trout), Barley (gluten). Check labels and substitutions.

Make it

1. Check the pearl barley packet; if it requires longer than 55 minutes, extend the total accordingly. Bring the measured water to a boil in the saucepan, add barley and half the salt, reduce to a steady gentle simmer and partly cover. Cook for 45–55 minutes, or the packet time, until chewy but without a hard center. Keep enough water around the grain; add boiling water if needed to prevent drying.

2. While the barley cooks, peel the prepared carrots into long thin ribbons no thicker than 1/16 inch/1–2 mm. Add to the barley for the last 4–5 minutes. Drain both thoroughly into a colander.

3. Return the empty saucepan to low heat. Add 2 teaspoons/10 ml oil, garlic and cumin; stir for 30 seconds without browning. Fold in the drained barley and carrots, half the lemon juice and all the parsley. Cover off the heat while cooking the fish; serve promptly rather than holding it for a long period.

4. Pat the trout dry and season with the remaining salt and black pepper. Heat the remaining 2 teaspoons/10 ml oil in the skillet over medium-high heat. Add both fillets with room between them. Cook for 3–4 minutes without moving, turn once with a broad fish slice and cook for 2–4 minutes more, until each thickest center reaches 145°F/63°C. Lower the heat if the surface darkens before the center is ready.

5. Divide the complete barley-carrot mixture between two plates, lift one fillet onto each and divide the remaining lemon juice over the fish.

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Estimated nutrition per serving

Calories: 555 kcal | Protein: 37.3 g | Carbohydrate: 58.9 g | Fat: 19.4 g | Fiber: 12.5 g. One of 2 servings. Batch yield: 2 trout fillets, each with half the carrot-and-barley mixture. Base ingredients and full measured oil included; optional variations excluded. Estimates vary with brands, cooking and actual portions.

Use the long simmer for the rest of dinner

The barley can simmer while you wash and chop the remaining ingredients and set out clean fish utensils. On an evening after training, that honest unattended span is more useful to plan around than calling the meal a fifteen-minute dinner.

A useful detail

The barley water is plain cooking water, largely drained; its volume is not an absorption ratio. The estimate counts all 120 g dry grain and all added oil, with no invented cooked-weight multiplier. Use pearled, not hulled barley. Additional plain boiling water does not add energy.

Another way

Replace the 300 g trout with 300 g boneless skinless Arctic char, cooking to 145°F/63°C.

Use 200 g thinly sliced zucchini instead of carrot and simmer only until just tender; the grain still receives its full packet cooking time.

Keep it well

Cool fish and barley in shallow containers and refrigerate within 2 hours, or 1 hour above 90°F/32°C. Keep at 40°F/4°C or below for up to 2 days. Reheat the portion needed to 165°F/74°C throughout, adding a little water to the barley. Fish becomes firmer on reheating. Carry cold portions with two cold sources.