Tomato, Olive and Tuna Pearl Couscous

2 light pearl-couscous meals, each with half the pasta, 60 g (2.1 oz) drained tuna and half the sauce and olives | Active 14 min | Cook 23 min | Total 45 min

Ingredients

- 150 g (5.3 oz) ripe tomatoes, washed and finely chopped, all juices retained
- 120 g (4.2 oz) dry pearl couscous with an 8-10 minute stovetop simmer time, not small instant couscous
- 200 ml (about 3/4 US cup plus 1 US tbsp) water for the simmer
- 5 ml (1 US tsp) olive oil
- 3 g garlic, about 1 small clove, finely chopped
- 0.5 g dried oregano, about 1/2 tsp
- 0.5 g fine salt, a small pinch, or less if olives are salty
- 120 g (4.2 oz) ready-to-eat canned tuna in spring water, drained weight
- 30 g (1.1 oz) pitted olives, quartered
- 10 ml (2 US tsp) lemon juice
- 5 g fresh flat-leaf parsley, about 2 US tbsp finely chopped
- Up to 30 ml (2 US tbsp) additional water, reserved for firm pearls only if the sauce becomes dry

Set out

1000 W microwave with turntable, Deep microwave-safe bowl, 2 L (about 2.1 US qt) capacity, Microwave-safe vented cover, Knife and board, Spoon and fork, Kitchen scale and measuring jug, Food thermometer, Oven mitts, Two serving bowls

Allergens

Wheat, Fish (tuna). Check labels and substitutions.

Make it

1. Put tomatoes and all their juices, olive oil, garlic, oregano and salt in the 2 L bowl. Cover with the vented cover. Microwave at 1000 W full power for 2 minutes, stir, then cook 1-2 minutes more until the tomatoes have softened and released a loose sauce.

2. Stir in the dry pearl couscous and the separate 200 ml water. Cover again and microwave at full power for 2-3 minutes, until bubbling. Reduce to 50% power and cook for 10-13 minutes, stopping to stir every 3 minutes, until the pasta centers are tender. If the sauce dries while the pearls are still firm, add 15 ml (1 US tbsp) of the reserved water and continue covered in 1-minute bursts, using the remaining reserve only if necessary.

3. Once the pearls are tender, fold in all the drained tuna and quartered olives. Cover and microwave at full power for 1 minute, stir gently, then heat 1-2 minutes more until the center and several other areas reach 165°F/74°C. Keep the tuna in flakes rather than beating it into a paste.

4. Stand covered for 2 minutes. Stir in all the lemon juice and parsley, then divide the entire pasta, fish and light tomato sauce between two bowls. Unused correction water stays out of the finished recipe.

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Two different couscous methods

These larger pearls are cooked by a covered simmer with stirring. They do not use the five-minute off-heat hydration method for fine instant couscous.

Finish after tenderness

Heat the tomato pasta until its centers are tender before adding tuna. The final fish stage warms the finished base evenly; it is not meant to rescue undercooked pasta.

Ingredient labels

Pearl couscous is wheat pasta. Check tuna and olives for other ingredients; salmon remains a fish allergen.

A useful detail

The 45-minute estimate allows chopping and measuring, up to 4 minutes tomato heating, 3 minutes to bring the pasta mixture back to a bubble, 13 minutes reduced-power simmer and 3 minutes final heating, then the 2-minute stand and serving. All heating is sequential in one oven. A different pearl size or longer packet simmer can extend the endpoint-controlled cooking; instant couscous cannot use this formula.

Another way

Replace the tuna with 120 g (4.2 oz) drained ready-to-eat canned salmon. Remove any unwanted skin and bones before weighing; the dish still contains fish.

Replace olives with 30 g (1.1 oz) drained ready-to-eat capers, rinsed if very salty. Keep the salt at the small listed amount or omit it if the capers supply enough.

Keep it well

Refrigerate shallow portions within 2 hours, or 1 hour above 90°F/32°C, at 40°F/4°C or below. Use within 2 days. Reheat once, covered and stirred, adding 15 ml (1 US tbsp) water per portion if needed, until 165°F/74°C throughout; stand covered for 2 minutes. Use any shorter opened-can storage instruction if it applies.