Bacon, Apple and Cabbage Skillet with Creamy Barley

4 plates, each with one-quarter of the creamy barley and bacon-cabbage-apple mixture · Active 30 min · Total 1 hr 15 min

Skills: Coordinating a grain saucepan with a covered skillet braise

Ingredients

- 1 1/4 cups pearl barley, rinsed (250 g dry)
- 4 cups water for barley (1 L)
- 1 cup milk (240 ml)
- 4 oz bacon, cut into short strips (120 g)
- 1 tablespoon neutral oil (15 ml)
- 1 medium onion, sliced (150 g prepared)
- About 6 packed cups green cabbage, cut into 1/2-inch/1 cm strips (600 g prepared)
- 2 firm apples, cored and cut into 1/2-inch/1.5 cm chunks (300 g prepared)
- 1/4 cup water for cabbage (60 ml)
- 1 tablespoon plain white vinegar (15 ml)
- 1/2 teaspoon dried thyme (0.5 g)
- 1/2 teaspoon fine salt (3 g), divided equally between barley and vegetables
- 1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper (1 g)

Set out

medium saucepan, colander, wide 12-inch/30 cm lidded skillet, knife and board, wooden spoon, measuring jug

Allergens

barley, milk. Check labels and substitutions.

Make it

1. Put barley and its 1 L water in the saucepan. Bring to a boil, reduce to a gentle simmer and cook partly covered for 40–50 minutes until the grains are tender with a little chew. Add a little water if the pan threatens to dry before they are tender. Drain any excess water.

2. Meanwhile, put bacon in the wide skillet over medium heat and cook for 8–10 minutes, stirring, until its fat has rendered and the edges are browned. Add oil and onion and cook for 5 minutes.

3. Add cabbage, the 60 ml water, thyme, 1.5 g salt and pepper. Toss carefully, cover and cook over medium-low heat for 10–12 minutes, stirring twice, until the cabbage has wilted and nearly softened.

4. Add apple chunks and vinegar. Cover and cook for 7–9 minutes until the apples are just tender and the cabbage is fully cooked. Uncover for the last 2 minutes if the pan is very wet. Keep hot while finishing the barley.

5. Return drained barley to its saucepan. Add milk and the remaining 1.5 g salt and simmer gently for 4–5 minutes, stirring, until creamy and hot. Divide between 4 plates and add one-quarter of the cabbage, apple, bacon and pan juices to each.

Bacon as seasoning

The measured 120 g is shared between four meals. There is no need to add extra slices to make the dish match the described portion.

Ingredient labels

Barley contains gluten. Check the bacon label for additional allergens; milk is added to the barley.

A useful detail

The barley sets the overall schedule. Begin it first, then cook the skillet mixture while it simmers; the final milk stage takes place after the barley is tender and drained.

Keep it well

Cool leftovers 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 3 days. Reheat the portion needed to 165°F/74°C throughout, adding a little water to loosen the barley. Previously cooked ham used in a variation keeps its original storage deadline.