

Leite's Culinaria Hot food, dry wit.™

Cauliflower "Couscous" with Basil-Lemon Sauce

by Eric Gower

from [The Breakaway Cook: Recipes that Break Away from the Ordinary](#)

(William Morrow, 2007)

Serves 8

For the longest time, I fought cauliflower. I usually prepared it Indian style, heavily spiced and cooked whole, but shied away from the floret stir-fry or other recipes with whole florets. Here, the cauliflower is finely chopped so it resembles couscous and will absorb other flavors. Try this excellent version, but also try replacing the sauce with different combos, like tamarind or pomegranate dressing for a sweet-tart rendition, or add some chipotle for a hot and smoky version. Great with a glass of unoaked Chardonnay.

INGREDIENTS

For the sauce

10 large (about 1 cup loosely packed) fresh basil leaves
Zest and juice of 2 lemons, preferably Meyer
1/2 cup fruity extra-virgin olive oil
1 tablespoon maple syrup

For the couscous

1 tablespoon unsalted butter
1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
1 medium red onion, finely diced
1 medium head of cauliflower, stalks and stems discarded, florets finely diced
Kosher salt
Freshly ground black pepper
1/4 cup Basil-Lemon Sauce
2 tablespoons fresh basil chiffonade

METHOD

Make the sauce

1. Combine the basil, lemon zest and juice, oil, and maple syrup in a blender. Purée and transfer to a jar with a tight-fitting lid. The sauce will keep in the refrigerator for about 7 to 10 days.

Make the couscous

1. Melt the butter with the olive oil in a chef's pan or wok large enough to hold all the cauliflower over high heat. Add the onion and sauté until the onion softens, about 2 minutes.

2. Add the cauliflower, stir thoroughly, salt and pepper liberally, and cook until the cauliflower softens, about 10 minutes.

3. Add 2 tablespoons of the sauce and cook until tender and fragrant, another 10 minutes. Adjust the salt, add the remaining 2 tablespoons sauce, mix thoroughly,

and transfer to a serving bowl. Top with the basil chiffonade.

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