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Ancient grains

FOX 25 Morning News

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(FOX 25 / MyFoxBoston.com) - If you're looking to incorporate more whole grains into your diet, we have the perfect cookbook for you. It's called " **Ancient Grains for Modern Meals: Mediterranean Whole Grain Recipes for Barley, Farro, Kamut, Polenta, Wheat Berries & More .** "

The cookbook author, journalist and food writer Maria Speck will join the FOX 25 Morning News Thursday. For more information, visit mariaspeck.com .

Wheat Berry Fools with Grand Marnier Figs

Serves 6 to 8

3/4 cup finely chopped dried figs, preferably Turkish or Greek

3 tablespoons Grand Marnier or other good-quality orange-flavored liqueur

1 cup plain whole-milk Greek yogurt

4 tablespoons honey

1 tablespoon plus 1 teaspoon freshly grated orange zest (about 2 oranges)

1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon

1 cup cooked soft whole wheat berries
1 cup heavy whipping cream, chilled

1 Combine the figs and the liqueur in a small bowl and set aside to plump for 15 minutes, stirring once or twice, while you prep the ingredients.

2 Meanwhile, beat the yogurt with 2 tablespoons of the honey, 1 tablespoon of the orange zest, and the cinnamon in a large bowl until smooth. Stir in the wheat berries. Using a hand mixer at medium speed, whip the cream in a medium bowl until foamy. Add the remaining 2 tablespoons honey and continue whipping until soft peaks form.

3 Drain the figs, reserving their juices. Combine 2 tablespoons of the figs with the remaining 1 teaspoon zest in a small bowl and set aside for garnish. Stir the remaining figs into the bowl with the yogurt mixture. Scrape one-third of the whipped cream on top and fold in using a spatula. Fold in the remaining whipped cream in 2 additions until just incorporated. Divide among serving bowls, cover with plastic wrap, and chill for 2 hours. To serve, top each bowl with a bit of the reserved figs and their juices.

to get a head start: The dessert can be prepared up to 4 hours ahead. Add a dash more liqueur to the figs reserved for the garnish, if necessary. To lighten it up: You can use lowfat plain Greek yogurt, if you like.

Mediterranean Mussels with Farro and White Wine

Serves 3 or 4 as a light main course, or 4 to 6 as a starter

farro
1 1/2 cups water
3/4 cup farro
1 small bay leaf
2 whole peppercorns
Pinch of fine sea salt

stew

2 pounds fresh mussels in their shells
2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
1 cup finely chopped yellow onion (about 1 small)

1 cup thinly sliced carrots (about 2 small)
1 cup thinly sliced celery stalks (1 to 2 pieces)
2 to 3 cloves garlic, lightly crushed
2 teaspoons minced fresh rosemary
2 bay leaves
1 dried red chile
1/2 teaspoon fine sea salt
1 1/2 cups dry white wine
1 1/2 cups chopped fresh or diced canned tomatoes with their juices, (one 14-ounce can)
1 1/2 cups water
1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
1 teaspoon sugar

to finish

2 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice, plus lemon wedges to serve
2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
1/4 cup chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley

1 To prepare the farro, bring the water, farro, bay leaf, peppercorns, and salt to a boil in a 2-quart saucepan. Decrease the heat to maintain a simmer, cover, and cook until the grain is tender but still slightly chewy, 20 to 25 minutes. Remove the bay leaf, drain any remaining liquid, and set aside.

2 While the farro simmers, rinse the mussels under cold running water, brushing to remove sand and residue on the shells. Remove the beards (hairy clumps around the shell) with tweezers or a sharp knife. Discard chipped mussels. Tap any open mussels and discard if they don't close. Set the cleaned mussels aside.

3 To make the stew, heat the olive oil in a large Dutch oven or heavy-bottomed pot over medium heat until shimmering. Add the onion, carrots, celery, garlic, 1 teaspoon of the rosemary, the bay leaves, chile, and 1/4 teaspoon of the salt. Cook, stirring frequently, until the vegetables soften, 3 to 5 minutes. Increase the heat to medium-high, add 1/4 cup of the white wine, and cook until syrupy and the liquid is almost gone, about 2 minutes. Add the tomatoes, the water, the remaining 1 1/4 cups white wine, the pepper, and the remaining 1/4 teaspoon salt; bring to a boil. Cook, uncovered, at a lively simmer until the carrots are crisp-tender, about 5 minutes. Stir in the sugar.

4 Add the mussels and the farro together with the remaining 1 teaspoon rosemary to the pot and bring to a boil. Cover and steam over medium to medium-high heat, shaking the pot once or twice in between, until the mussels open, 2 to 3 minutes. Remove from the heat, and discard any unopened mussels.

5 To finish, add the lemon juice. Taste for salt and pepper and adjust. Drizzle the mussels with the olive oil and serve right away in deep plates, garnished with parsley and with lemon wedges on the side.

to get a head start: Make the farro, as in step 1, ahead (see page 23). The stew, as in step 3, can be prepared up to 3 days ahead. Reheat before adding the mussels and farro, as in step 4. The mussels should be bought

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