



STOP FOOD WASTE WEEK 2019


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'CATCH ALL' COUSCOUS

By Rozanne Stevens, from 'Eat Well at Work Cookbook'

This dish is a great way to use up bits and pieces that are left over in the kitchen, or when you've gone a bit overboard buying 'nibbly' things. I'm rather embarrassed by how easy this recipe is! It's something I made up one day and whip up at home in mere minutes.

All that is required is one frying pan with a lid and a kettle. Sauté some chorizo (or bacon lardons) until the fat renders out, add some goodies such as halved cherry tomatoes, olives, chickpeas and any other bits that you like. Pour in a packet of couscous, add boiling water, cover and leave to stand for ten minutes. Add a bit of crumbled feta cheese, a handful of rocket and voilà, dinner is ready!

Change things up according to what you have in the fridge - it literally is a 'catch all' recipe. Any extra is delicious as a packed lunch. Keep the rocket separate and add just before serving. This will stay fresh in the fridge for up to three days.

Ingredients:

100g chorizo sausage, skinned and diced
A handful of halved cherry tomatoes
A handful of black olives
250g tomato flavoured couscous
1 tin chickpeas, rinsed and drained
100g feta cheese, crumbled
1 lemon, juice and zest
150g rocket
Olive oil, to dress
Extra lemon, to dress

Method:

- Cook the chorizo in a pan until crispy.
- Add the tomatoes and olives and heat through.
- Add the couscous and pour over the correct amount of boiling water.
Put the lid on and allow to sit for 10 minutes.
- Sprinkle over feta and fluff up with a fork.
- Serve up the couscous with rocket on top, dressed with lemon juice and olive oil.

For cookbooks and Zero Waste Cookery Classes visit
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COUSCOUS – THE GREAT 'CATCH ALL' INGREDIENT

Couscous is made from semolina, so it is actually tiny balls of pasta. On its own, it is pretty bland, but it soaks up flavours extremely well. This is what makes it perfect to add loads of bits and bobs to, and also to bulk out leftovers.

Unless I buy sachets of flavoured couscous, which I do like, I normally get the wholewheat couscous. It has a bit more fibre and vitamins, with a similar taste and texture. I find it is actually less 'soggy' than the regular couscous, which is prone to sogginess if you add too much boiling liquid.

To keep couscous fresh, pour it into an airtight container with a tight-fitting lid. I prefer glass jars so I can easily see what's in my store cupboard. Use up any couscous before adding more to the jar. It's like pasta, there's nothing that can really go 'off' in couscous. But, like all grains, weevils* love it so hence the airtight container.

You can add flavour to couscous by cooking it in stock, dressing it in olive oil and lemon juice, and adding fresh herbs. You can also add a mixture of soft herbs (e.g. parsley, mint and coriander) and this is a great way to use up straggly bits of herbs, and several herbs at once. Finely chop the stalks and add them too, if they're not too woody.

To add a Moroccan vibe to your couscous, use spices such as ground cinnamon, cumin and coriander in your dressing. I recommend very gently heating the spices in the olive oil, until you can just begin to smell them. This helps to get rid of the gritty texture and also brings out the flavour: an excellent way to revive out of date spices that have become stale and lacklustre.

Dried fruit such as raisins, sultanas, cranberries and chopped apricots are delicious in couscous. Add them to the spiced olive oil as you are heating it to help plump up the fruit. This is ideal if the dried fruit has become beyond dry, almost fossilized.

Cheap, cheerful and catch-all.

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* Weevils are tiny little beetles that like to munch on flour and grains and loads of other pantry foods. They come in from the factory as they survive the milling process and they'll chomp through packaging. If you see little black 'grains' that move, or a cobweb like substance on your flour, you've been weeviled! The only solution is to chuck everything out and clean your container.

