

Middle Eastern Couscous With Sweet Dried Fruit for Tu Bishvat

1 cup walnuts or almonds or a combination of both
1 tablespoon oil or oil spray
1 large onion, peeled and chopped
2 tablespoons olive oil
4 tablespoons silan or date syrup
2 tablespoons maple syrup
2 teaspoons pomegranate syrup
2 tablespoons wine (red or white) optional
4 tablespoons water
4-5 dried apricots, chopped
4 dates, chopped
1/2 cup dried cranberries
8-10 prunes, pitted and sliced
Salt to taste

Directions:

To toast almonds or walnuts, preheat 350 F/180 C. Put nuts on parchment lined rimmed baking sheet and lightly spray with oil. Spread in one even layer in pan. Roast nuts 8 minutes or so and check (time it!!) and if needed toast 3-4 more minutes till fragrant and lightly toasted. They can burn very easily so do not step away from the oven and keep an eye on them. Remove promptly and let cool on a plate or bowl not on the same baking sheet since the residual heat can overcook them.

Place the additional oil in a frying pan and sauté the onions until deep yellow or light brown. Add all the sliced and chopped dried fruit to the onions. Add the date syrup, pomegranate syrup and wine (if using) to the mixture in the frying pan, add the water. Cook on low heat until the liquid reduces to a syrupy consistency, about 20-25 minutes, stirring from time to time. Place couscous mounded on a platter, pour over the cooked fruit mixture on top. Top with the toasted nuts and serve as is or with grilled pargit, roast chicken, beef or any main you fancy.