

تبولة

Taboulie

finely chopped herb, tomato, and bulgur wheat salad

Recipe by Julie Ann Sageer ~ Julie Taboulie

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It's no surprise that taboulie is one of my absolute favorite things to make and eat—it's a part of my TV name and identity! This refreshing salad of finely chopped vegetables, herbs, and bulgur wheat originated in the area around Mount Lebanon and is an iconic Lebanese dish throughout the world—there's even a National Taboulie Day celebrated on the first Saturday of July.

In Lebanese culture, there is no gathering or meal that doesn't feature a big bowl of taboulie on the table. Although you can eat it with a spoon or fork, I always serve taboulie the traditional way: with fresh romaine hearts to scoop it up.

MAKES 6 SERVINGS

3 bunches fresh flat-leaf parsley leaves, finely chopped

1/3 cup fresh mint leaves, finely chopped

1/2 cup #1 fine bulgur wheat, or 1 cup cooked, chilled quinoa for a gluten free version

4 firm, ripe tomatoes, finely diced

6 scallions, ends trimmed, green and white parts thinly sliced

3/4 cup to 1 cup freshly squeezed lemon juice

1/2 cup olive oil

1 1/2 teaspoons sea salt

Hearts of romaine leaves, for serving

At least 30 minutes before preparing the taboulie, thoroughly wash the parsley and mint leaves in cold water to remove dirt or debris. Shake out any excess water and drain in a colander, stem sides down. If you have a salad spinner, you can dry the herbs in that way or lay out on paper towels or a clean kitchen cloth to air dry; just make sure they are very dry before you chop them.

Place the bulgur wheat into a bowl and cover with 3 cups of cold water. Set aside to soak and soften, about 20 minutes.

Combine the tomatoes, scallions, and herbs in that order in a large mixing bowl. By now, the bulgur wheat should have softened. To test, squeeze some of the grains between your fingertips, it should squish and be completely soft. Soak the bulgur longer if needed.

Using your hands, squeeze out the soaked bulgur, removing as much excess water as possible. Sprinkle the bulgur on top of the fresh herbs and vegetables in the bowl. Pour in the lemon juice and olive oil, and season with the salt. Toss all the ingredients together (preferably with your hands); it should be juicy but not soggy. Taste and add salt as needed.

Serve the salad as soon as possible with fresh, crisp romaine lettuce hearts for scooping.

TABOULIE TIP! The cut matters! Use a sharp serrated knife for best results. Finely chop.

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