



Fennel and Orange Quinoa Salad

(makes 2 servings)

I love this salad on its own as it is so fresh, colourful and satisfying but it also makes a good 'side' to a thick fillet of baked 'meaty' fish like cod, halibut or turbot.

Ingredients

100g quinoa
1 large or 2 small fennel bulbs, trimmed and divided into quarters or eighths
50mls fresh orange juice
1 pinch saffron powder
Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
Light olive oil plus extra virgin olive oil
1 tablespoon tahini paste
1 tablespoon flaked almonds
1 orange, skin and pith removed with a sharp knife and segmented
2 tablespoons pomegranate seeds plus 1 tablespoon finely chopped fresh chives

Method

Soak the quinoa in cool water for 15 minutes then drain and rinse and place in a pot. Cover with boiling water (use a cup to measure the soaked quinoa and use one and a half times that amount of boiling water). Bring to the boil, stir well, turn the heat to very low, put a lid on the pot and lightly 'steam' for 30 minutes then turn off the heat and set the pot aside (don't remove the lid).

Put the fennel in a bowl with the orange juice, saffron, a dash of salt and plenty of black pepper, cover and leave to 'infuse' for 20 minutes then drain (keeping the liquid). Dry the fennel off with paper towel, lightly paint each quarter with the light olive oil, place on a baking sheet under a hot grill and grill them (turning often) until they are cooked through but still have a bit of 'bite' and are nicely caramelised.

Combine the tahini paste with the strained orange/saffron/fennel marinade until really smooth and creamy. Toast the flaked almonds in a small dry frying pan - watch them like a hawk as they burn in the blink of an eye! Fork through the quinoa until all the grains are separate then mix the tahini dressing through before placing on a serving plate.

Arrange the grilled fennel and orange segments around, scatter the pomegranate seeds, chopped chives and almonds over the whole lot, drizzle some extra virgin olive oil over the salad and serve.