

## **Apricot Oatmeal with lemon lavender glazed almonds**

When apricots are super-ripe, they basically fall apart, and even breathing on them is too much for their delicate flesh. Best to cook something else -- oatmeal, say, and honey-caramelized nuts tickled with lemon and lavender. Then crown each bowl with fresh, ripe, unadulterated apricots, placing them face-up, ready, and prone.

Serves 4

2 cups old-fashioned oats

Salt

1 tablespoon butter

2 tablespoons honey

1 cup dry-roasted, unsalted almonds

2 teaspoons (lightly packed) lemon zest, divided (from 1 large or 2 small lemons)

1/4 teaspoon culinary lavender, divided

8 small, ripe apricots, cut into quarters or eighths

Cold milk or cream, for dribbling

Bring 4 cups of water to a boil in a medium saucepan. Add the oats and a pinch of salt. Give a stir, reduce heat to medium-low, partly cover, and let bubble gently for about 10 minutes, stirring twice. Turn off the burner, cover fully, and let stand off-heat for 10 minutes.

Meanwhile, make the glazed almonds. Place a large, wide skillet over medium-high heat. Add the butter and honey, and when the butter melts, swirl the skillet a few times to combine evenly. Add the almonds, a good pinch of salt, half the lemon zest, and half the lavender. Stir constantly for one minute with a heatproof spatula until bubbly and glossy. Remove from the heat.

To serve, divide the oatmeal among 4 bowls. (I don't sweeten my oatmeal when I'm topping it with sweet fruit and nuts, but by all means, if you want to sweeten yours with brown sugar, maple syrup, or honey, go for it.) Scrape the caramelly almonds up with a spoon and divide among the bowls. (Don't neglect the sticky part -- rewarm the skillet to loosen the caramel, if necessary.) Top with the apricots, and sprinkle with the remaining lemon zest and lavender. Dribble with milk or cream.