

Wehani Rice Salad with a trio of cherries, almonds, and mint

Meeting Jessica Lundberg inspired me to create this salad because cherries and chewy brown rice struck me as a completely natural fit. Since it's cherry season here in California, I went all out, incorporating red Garnet cherries, yellow Rainiers, and even dried Montmorency cherries into the mix. A touch of greenery, a few nuts, and a slick of almond oil finished things off beautifully.

Serves 4

1 cup wehani brown rice (available at major U.S. markets), or your favorite whole grain or wild rice
2 cups water
1/2 pound assorted fresh cherries, pitted, stemmed, quartered
1/2 cup dried cherries, halved
1/2 cup toasted slivered almonds
1 handful baby spinach leaves, rolled up into a cigar-shape and thinly sliced (chiffonade)
8 to 10 leaves fresh mint, cut into chiffonade (see above)
1-1/2 tablespoons almond oil (or other nut oil)
1/2 teaspoon raspberry or other fruit vinegar (or more, to taste)
Generous pinch coarse salt

Cook rice according to package directions either on the stovetop or in a rice cooker. Fluff with a fork and let cool completely.

Combine rice and all remaining ingredients in a large salad bowl. Stir gently to combine.