



## ANSON MILLS

### **Tabbouleh with Farro**

#### **Yield**

6 side dish portions

#### **Time**

About 20 minutes, not including the farro cooking time

#### **Cooking Remarks**

This dish requires next to no cooking, but if you dump the vegetables in the food processor or take a hatchet to them, you'll wind up with gazpacho. A bit of hand artistry divests the tomatoes and cucumbers of their guts and seeds and transforms them into trim, meaty fillets that can be cut into a tiny dice known as *brunoise*. Expect to have some leftover trimmings, though.

Occasionally, tabbouleh recipes call for sumac, a culinary and medicinal herb, dried and used in a number of Middle Eastern preparations. It has a bright, astringent finish. Sumac is pleasing, but it doesn't make or break the dish, in our opinion. Those who wish to pursue authenticity rigorously will encounter any number of arcane spices from the Fertile Crescent that have been associated with tabbouleh, but their search will likely be along the aisles of the Internet, not the grocery store. In the Middle East, tabbouleh is usually scooped onto spears of romaine lettuce and eaten out of hand.

Tabbouleh is best experienced as soon as it is made, when its colors are at their vibrant best and its flavors bright and green. On the second day, the tabbouleh will still taste wonderful, but it might have begun to weep quietly to itself, highlighting another advantage of using farro: it drinks up the delicious juices put out by the cucumbers, tomatoes, and herbs and keeps the salad from drooping noticeably.

#### **Equipment Mise en Place**

For this recipe, you will need a paring knife, a citrus reamer, a vegetable peeler, a chef's knife, a large mixing bowl, and a wooden spoon.

#### **Ingredients**

2 medium cucumbers

3 or 4 medium ripe tomatoes

1 garlic clove, peeled

2 bunches flat-leaf parsley, washed, dried, and stemmed

1 small bunch mint, washed, dried, and stemmed

1 scallion, trimmed

1 recipe Perfect Basic Slow Roasted Farro or Plain and Simple Farro Piccolo

2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

2 tablespoons juice from 1 large, juicy lemon  
Fine sea salt and freshly ground black pepper  
24 small romaine lettuce leaves, washed and dried (optional)

### **Directions**

**1.** Peel the cucumbers and trim the ends. Slice the cucumbers in half lengthwise and scrape away the seeds using a small spoon. Slice each half lengthwise into quarters, creating long strips. Each strip will have a thin, translucent band of flesh that held the seeds. Holding a sharp blade parallel to the counter, trim away that strip. Slice the fillets into thin strips between  $\frac{1}{8}$  inch and  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch wide, and then cut crosswise into fine dice. You should have about 1 cup. Turn the diced cucumbers into a large mixing bowl.

**2.** Stand each tomato on its bottom and remove the core with a sharp paring knife. Cut the tomatoes lengthwise into quarters. Place each quarter on its back and trim away the seeds and juicy flesh from the inside by slicing parallel to the counter. Discard the guts. Trim the edges of each quarter to make a neat, meaty rectangle, then slice off the remaining rib of flesh so the rectangle is flat. Cut each tomato fillet into thin strips between  $\frac{1}{8}$  inch and  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch wide, and then cut crosswise into fine dice. You should have about 1 cup. Turn the tomatoes into the bowl with the cucumbers.

**3.** Cut the garlic clove in half lengthwise and smash it with the side of the chef's knife, taking care not to obliterate it into several pieces. Stir the garlic into the tomatoes and cucumbers and set the bowl aside.

**4.** Grab a handful of parsley leaves and bunch it up against the side of the chef's knife, then slice the leaves into fine julienne. Repeat until all the parsley is julienned. Julienne the mint in the same way. Slice the scallion into thin rings. Retrieve the crushed garlic from the bowl and discard it. Stir the herbs into the cucumber-tomato mixture. Add the farro, olive oil, lemon juice, 1 teaspoon salt, and  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon pepper. Toss to combine and taste for seasoning. Serve straightaway with romaine leaves, if desired.