

How to make couscous

Traditional Moroccan couscous is made in a steaming process and can take several hours. It is made using a special pot called a [couscoussier](#). Essentially a stock pot with a steaming pot above it. The holes are slightly small than a normal steaming pot but you could get around this by lining your normal steamer with a [tightly woven cheesecloth](#).



The couscous used to make it the traditional way is the same couscous that's used to make instant couscous; only the preparation is different.

To start a traditional preparation mix warm water with some salt and have a good olive oil on hand. Mix the olive oil and water to dampen the couscous grains, massaging it to get everything damp. There shouldn't be excess water pooling. Once soaked add the couscous to the steamer pot. The bottom of the steamer is where the topping (the vegetables/meat etc) is cooked and the flavors from this infuse the couscous on top.

The First Steam

Cover the couscous with the lid of the steamer. I also suggest placing a towel between the lid and the pot to catch the condensation. The first steaming will take about 20-25 minutes.

Prepare a large, wide plate while the first steam finishes. You also will need more salt water and olive oil. Remove the steamer from the pot and pour the couscous into the large dish you've prepared.

See how; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h88K1qITwfc&t=1s>

Just as you did the first time, you will want to dampen the couscous again with the olive oil and salt water. Rub the grains between your hands to loosen them from clumping. Yes, it will be hot, you may want to wait a few minutes for the couscous to cool slightly. I have also used forks to do this part but if you can use your hands it really does have better results.

How to do the "fluff"

See how: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pKKSgYNQh7I&t=2s>

The Second Steam

Return the couscous to the top of the steamer, returning the towel to the top and the lid as well. The second steam may go a little quicker as the couscous has already begun to get softer. After 15 minutes lift the lid and check to see if the couscous is drying out or still damp. If it is dry it can be taken off. If it is still damp leave it an additional 5 minutes.

When it has become dry follow the same process as you did for the first steam, transferring it to the plate. Applying the salt water and olive oil and fluffing the grains for the last time.

The Final Steam

Here you'll repeat the exact same thing as you did for the second steam. Once the couscous is separated you'll return it to the steamer and give it a final steam. This will likely only take 15 minutes or so depending on how wet you've made the couscous.

When the final steam has happened you will do one final "fluff" but this time pour the couscous onto the dish you will use for serving. Coat your hands with olive oil to do the final breaking up of any clumps that may remain and give the couscous its final fluff.



Serving the Couscous

Make a mound of the couscous in the middle of the plate. You may want to make a shallow well in the middle. First add any meat (if using) to the well area, then begin arranging the vegetables. In Morocco these are usually arranged nicely around the circle to create a pattern alternating vegetables with small things like chickpeas or green peas on top. Use some of the liquid to pour on top of the couscous and add the rest to small bowls so that those eating can add as much or as little as they like. Some people like their couscous with lots of sauce, and others prefer just a little.