

ORZO PILAF WITH SPICED VEGETABLES

(Recipe inspired by Kokkari Estiatorio in San Francisco)

INGREDIENTS:

1/2 pound Japanese eggplant

1/2 pound zucchini

1 red bell pepper

1/2 red onion

2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil

1 teaspoon ground toasted cumin

1 teaspoon sweet, smoked Spanish paprika

Sea salt & fresh ground black pepper

2 tablespoons unsalted butter

1 cup orzo pasta

1 3/4 cup boiling broth or water

DIRECTIONS:

Preheat oven to 475° F. Dice eggplant, zucchini, bell pepper, and onion into 1/2 inch pieces. Place in a large bowl and toss with the olive oil. Add cumin and paprika. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Spread vegetables in a single layer on a baking sheet and bake until slightly crisp (20-25 minutes). In a medium saucepan, melt butter over medium-high heat until butter becomes fragrant and nut brown. Lower heat, add orzo and stir for 3 minutes. Add 1 3/4 cup water or broth and 1/2 teaspoon salt. Cover and reduce until liquid is absorbed and orzo is al dente (10-12 minutes). Spoon orzo onto a platter and top with vegetables.

This dish pairs beautifully with braised short ribs or a seared lamb chop and a bottle of 2019 Robert Biale Grande Vineyard Zinfandel.



— ROBERT —
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