Tabbouleh

Tabbouleh is all about the parsley. It is not a bulgur salad with some parsley to flavor and freshen it up. It's a parsley salad. Fresh, grassy, flat-leafed parsley chopped lovingly in zen bliss (or frenetically to heavy metal if that's your jam) by hand. And a lot of it. So much that it's a commitment. All that's required is a sharp knife. Fine bulgur is traditionally used and requires less soaking time, but it's not that easy to find. If you have a Middle Eastern market close by or want to order online, go for it, but we use the more accessible medium-grind bulgur.

Don't try to process the herbs in a food processor, you'll end up with pesto or a puree. We do recommend using the tender parsley stems in addition to the parsley leaves. The stems give a little texture and juiciness. It's less waste and tons of flavor.

Ingredients

1/2 cup medium-grind bulgur wheat (3¼ ounces)
1 teaspoon finely grated lemon zest
3 to 4 tablespoons fresh lemon juice (from 1 large lemon)
6 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
1 teaspoon kosher salt
Freshly ground black pepper
2 cups finely chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley leaves and tender stems (about 2 bunches)
1/2 cup finely chopped fresh mint leaves
1 cup grape tomatoes, quartered (about 5 ounces)
1/2 cup finely chopped red onion
2 Persian or other mini cucumbers, chopped about same size as tomatoes
romaine lettuce leaves, washed and dried, to serve (optional)

Directions

Pour 1/2 cup of boiling water over the bulgur in a heat-proof bowl or 2-cup glass measuring cup, cover, then let soak for 30 minutes. Drain bulgur if very wet, then return to the bowl and stir in 3 tablespoons of the lemon zest and juice, oil, the salt and pepper to taste. Cover and chill for 1 hour.

Transfer the bulgur to a mixing bowl and gently stir in the parsley, mint, tomatoes, red onions, and cucumbers. Adjust seasonings and serve immediately with lettuce leaves if you like.

total time: 1 hour 45 minutes
active prep: 1 hour

serves: 6 to 8
difficulty: *medium*