



Let's Get Freekeh

Is it a rice? Is it a pasta? Nope, it's freekeh, a supergrain that could knock quinoa right off its healthy-grain pedestal. We teamed up with Tom & Serg to give you three delicious recipes for cooking with this tasty and wholesome ingredient, as well as tell you why it's so awesome.

By Yi-Hwa Hanna

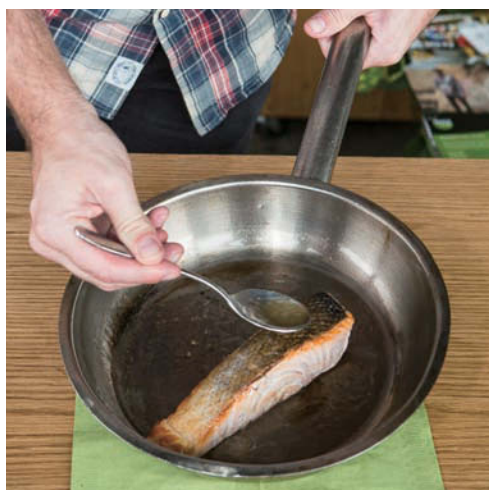
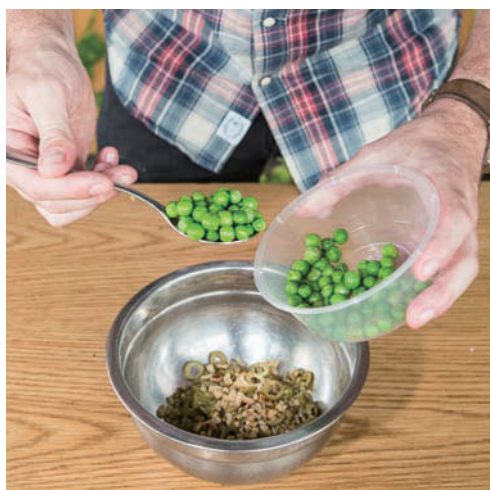
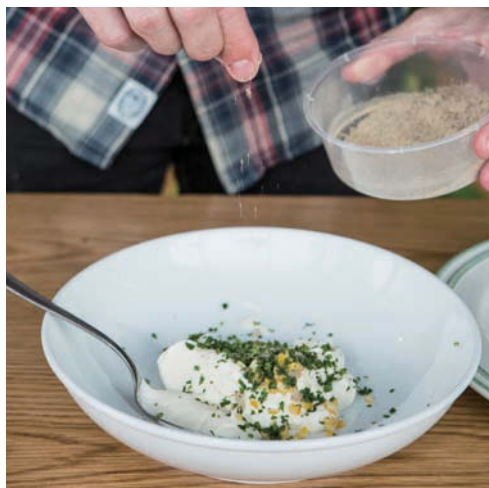
The rest of the world may only be starting to pick up on the numerous amazing health benefits of this grain now, but in the Arab world, freekeh has been around for centuries. Sometimes called farik, this essential part of Middle Eastern cuisine is wheat that's been harvested while it's still young and green. The seeds, harvested while they are still soft before being sun-dried, boast a uniquely firm yet slightly chewy texture and a nutty, earthy, and somewhat smoky and roasted flavour that

is distinctly moreish. As for its many health benefits...well, where do we begin? Not only is it low in fat, but it's also high in protein and fibre—with almost twice that of quinoa in each serving—which means it'll help keep you fuller for longer. As a whole grain, it's packed with essential nutrients such as selenium, potassium, magnesium, zinc, calcium and iron, and it's also low on the glycemic index. Intrigued yet? Read on for some delicious recipes and cooking tips from the dynamic duo, Tom & Serg.



TAKE NOTE:

Freekeh is wheat, so it isn't suitable for those seeking or needing to go gluten-free.



Pan Fried Salmon

SERVES 1

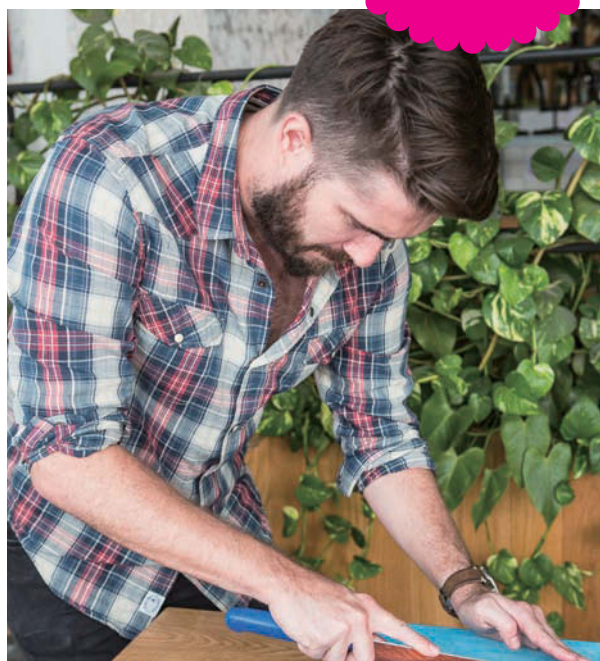
- 160g salmon
- 100g freekeh mixture (to serve with; see recipe on page 78)
- 20g pickled fennel
- 60g local watercress, picked and washed
- 10ml lemon oil dressing

Heat up a skillet on medium to high heat and heat up olive oil, pat the salmon skin dry, season well. Place the salmon skin-side down on the pan, fry for 2-3 minutes or until skin is nice and crispy. Meanwhile, in a salad bowl, dress the salad greens with the lemon dressing and set aside. Once salmon skin is crispy, cook the opposite side until medium rare. Place your cooked freekeh on a plate, add crispy skinned salmon and finish with your lightly tossed greens on top. Serve immediately.





Want to try it made by the experts? Find the Panfried Salmon with Freekeh on the menu at Tom & Serg, in Dubai's Al Quoz. Visit tomandserg.com



"We love cooking with freekeh for its health benefits, but also because it absorbs so much more flavour than couscous or rice. It's really versatile and easy to cook with."

- Tom & Serg

Freekeh Soup

SERVES 4

- 1 cup uncooked freekeh (whole or cracked grain)
- 4 tbsp olive oil
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 150g lamb loin, in 1 cm cubes
- 1 1/2 teaspoon harissa (garlic, chili, and olive oil purée)
- 1.5 litre chicken stock
- 2 tightly packed cups baby spinach leaves, washed and dried
- 1/2 cup chopped fresh coriander
- juice of 1 lemon
- 1 tomato diced
- salt and pepper

Heat oil in saucepan and fry onions and lamb until light golden. Add harissa. Add freekeh and coat grains well. Slowly add chicken stock and simmer for 20 minutes or longer, until grains are tender. When ready to serve, add the tomato, lemon juice, spinach leaves, coriander and season to taste. Simmer for another 5 minutes. Serve in soup bowls while hot. Garnish with fresh coriander.

Freekeh Mixture

MAKES 500g

- 1/2 box freekeh
- 125g green olives
- 75g pine nuts
- 20g coriander, picked, washed, chopped
- 20g parsley picked, washed, chopped
- 15g EVOO
- 30g corn oil
- 15g mint leaves
- Pinch of salt
- Pinch of white pepper
- 250g green peas

Using a heavy-based pot, add your freekeh to cold water and cook 15 to 20 minutes. Once cooked, thoroughly drain your freekeh and let it cool down. In a large mixing bowl, mix all the ingredients together and season properly. Serve it as 10g per portion.

Freekeh Burgers

SERVES 4

- 1 large onion, finely chopped
- 2 medium carrots, grated
- 2 sticks celery, grated
- 30 ml olive oil
- 2 large cloves garlic, crushed
- 250g cooked freekeh
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- 1 tsp ground coriander
- 1/4 cup parsley, chopped
- 1 egg
- 100g fresh bread crumbs
- juice from 1/2 lemon
- flour for coating, oil for shallow frying

Fry the onion, carrot, and celery in the olive oil until soft and lightly browned. Transfer to a bowl and combine with garlic, freekeh, cumin, coriander, parsley, and lemon juice. Add egg and process roughly in a blender until mixture binds together, then add bread crumbs, salt and pepper, and refrigerate for 1 hour. Shape the mixture into burgers and lightly coat in flour. Fry in the oil, taking care when turning the burgers over. Drain on paper towels and serve with fresh salad greens.

TOM & SERG'S TOP TIPS

Fine-Tuned Freekeh

For best results, put your freekeh in a bowl, add water and a tea towel covering. Place the bowl in the fridge and leave to soak overnight.

When looking for a good brand of freekeh, make sure its locally produced.

Never, ever over-cook your freekeh!