

California Avocados Hit Their Peak Just In Time For Summer

(NAPS)—Summer is upon us and it's time to celebrate as California avocados are at the peak of their season and freshly picked in season produce is at its peak in flavor and nutrition. The nutrient-dense fruit stands as the highlight of any dish, now readily available and undeniably delicious. This is the perfect time to take advantage of the warmer weather by enjoying and sharing the heart-healthy superfood.

The California Avocado Commission (CAC) has enlisted the well-known culinary talents of Sam Zien, of Not Not Tacos in San Diego, to develop a recipe that consumers can make right at home. Zien prides himself on creating innovative and often unexpected dishes that honor the Golden State's flavors and distinct personality.

Zien's Pearl Couscous with California Avocado and Crispy Tofu offers as many flavors as it does textures. For example, the combination of the recipe's chili spice contrasts nicely with the fresh, California avocado's creamy quality to provide a layered complexity.

"This dish is a great example of how something as subtle as the California avocado can really impact a single bite," said Zien.

PEARL COUSCOUS WITH CALIFORNIA AVOCADO AND CRISPY TOFU [3]

Recipe created by Sam Zien of Not Not Tacos for the California Avocado Commission

Serves: 4

Prep time: 30 minutes

Cook time: 30 minutes

Total time: 60 minutes



Pearl Couscous with California Avocado and Crispy Tofu

Ingredients:

- 1 lb. extra firm tofu
- 2½ Tbsp. extra virgin olive oil, divided
- ½ tsp. sea salt
- 1 tsp. chili powder
- 1½ cups water
- 1 cup pearl couscous
- 3 large shiitake mushrooms, stems removed and thinly sliced
- 2 Tbsp. fresh lemon juice
- 2 tsp. soy sauce
- 1 clove garlic, peeled and minced
- 1 tsp. minced ginger
- ½ tsp. sugar
- 2 tsp. sriracha
- 3 radishes, thinly sliced
- ¼ cup finely diced red onion
- ¼ cup finely chopped green onion
- ½ cup diced tomato
- 3 Tbsp. finely chopped cilantro
- ½ tsp. coarse sea salt, or to taste
- 2 ripe, Fresh California Avocados, seeded, peeled and diced

Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees F.
2. Drain the tofu by removing from the package, lay flat and slice in half

horizontally. Place the slices in a single layer of 3–4 sheets of paper towels. Top tofu with additional paper towels and a heavy object (i.e. cast-iron pan) and let sit 15 minutes.

3. Uncover the tofu, cut into small cubes and place into a large mixing bowl.

4. Add about ½ Tbsp. olive oil and season with salt and chili powder.

5. Heat a large oven-safe pan over medium heat and add the seasoned tofu cubes.

6. Place the pan over medium heat, and cook, shaking the pan occasionally until tofu begins to brown on all sides, about 5 minutes.

7. Transfer the pan to the oven and cook tofu for 20–25 minutes or until crispy, remove and set aside.

o Alternatively, after seasoning the tofu cubes you can place them in a single layer in an air fryer and cook at 375 degrees F for 15 minutes.

8. While the tofu bakes, bring water to a boil in a medium saucepan and add couscous and shiitake mushrooms; stir then reduce heat to a simmer, cover and cook until the water is absorbed, about 10–15 minutes.

9. Remove from heat, put in a large bowl and allow to cool.

10. Combine lemon juice, soy sauce, garlic, ginger, sugar, sriracha and remaining olive oil in a small bowl and mix until sugar dissolves. Set aside until ready to serve.

11. Once couscous is cooled, add radishes, red onion, green onion, tomato, cilantro and sea salt.

12. Dress the couscous mixture evenly then spoon on plates, adding the crispy tofu and diced avocado.