

Cauliflower with Peas

This is a simple but versatile recipe. You can replace the cauliflower with almost any vegetable. If you use zucchini, try cutting it into 1/2 inch (1 cm) slices and then quartering these and microwaving for 90 seconds or so to soften them prior to putting them in the pan. I would suggest the same pre-cooking for string beans, brussel sprouts, and pretty much any denser vegetable. Both broccoli and cauliflower florets will soften enough in the pan.

Time: It takes me about 10-15 minutes to assemble and chop up the ingredients, 5-10 minutes to get the concoction going. The last phase of cooking can be pretty much unmonitored. Total time to make this is about 30-40 minutes. If you want this as the main dish, you might make some brown rice. Check out that recipe - very easy.

Ingredients:

- 2 Tbsp of canola or olive oil
- 1 tsp cumin seeds
- 1 tsp freshly grated ginger (I just actually cut this up - grating it makes a mess of the grater - harder to clean - to say nothing of risk cuts on your hands as you try to grate it)
- 1/2 tsp of minced garlic (I like garlic, so I tend to use about 5 cloves, but into small pieces - mincing is not really necessary - my goal is LESS WORK)
- 1/2 of a small yellow onion, chopped into small pieces
- 1 small head of cauliflower, cut into bite-sized florets - MANY alternatives can be substituted here, depending on what you have in the fridge
- 1 cup of frozen peas - adds color, taste, and easily available year-round
- 1 cup of fresh tomatoes if they are in season - it probably is not worth using the tasteless baseball tomatoes that show up in the winter
- I sometimes add about 1/4 cup of thinly sliced carrots - so-called julienne cutting or "matchstick" cutting - for color and for a bit of carrot flavor in the mix
- 1 tsp ground turmeric
- 2 Tbsp ground coriander
- 1/2 tsp black pepper
- 1/4 tsp of cayenne pepper - IF YOU WANT - I never add this - too hot for me
- 1/2 tsp of salt if you wish - try to limit this, especially if you have high blood pressure - it tastes great without salt

OK - let's COOK:

1. Heat the oil in a large skillet - I use a huge iron skillet - heavy, but very durable and pretty easy to clean
2. After about 1-2 minutes on high heat, add the cumin seeds and push them around a bit from time to time
3. After about 30-60 seconds, throw in the garlic, ginger, and onion. Saute on medium or high heat for about 2-4 minutes - if the skillet is spitting out hot oil, TURN the heat down. Once the onions look somewhat clear - go to the next step
4. Add the cauliflower (or whatever vegetable is your main ingredient). Cover with a big lid to keep the moisture in and cook on low to medium heat for about 5-10 minutes. Stir and check on it occasionally

5. When the cauliflower seems to be softening up a bit (not so soft you can cut right through it with butter knife easily, but not so firm it is a struggle to cut with a butter knife), add peas and tomatoes, and stir in the turmeric, black pepper, coriander (and cayenne if using this). You may add some salt or not depending on your preference
6. Cook on low heat for 5 or more minutes - at this point, I keep it uncovered to try to boil off some of the fluid. Look at the dish, and if there seems to be very little fluid, cover it. If there is a lot of fluid, don't cover it. You don't want a soupy soft mess - each vegetable should remain distinct, but the spices should mix well in the dish. You may need to try this a few times to get it just right for YOUR preference - if you like the vegetable soft and soupy, cover it more. If you like your vegetables more blackened a bit and dry, keep it uncovered
7. Makes about 4 servings - though in my home, we often use this as the main dish, there isn't much left after my wife and I gobble it up