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Mark Bittman on Food July 30, 2009, 11:50 AM

An Almost-Vegan, Savory Breakfast

By MARK BITTMAN

There is a certain percentage of the Bitten audience that will be turned off by this post. (I have in fact only recently realized that there is a certain percentage of the Bitten audience, always varying, that will hate any post.) One cannot please everyone all of the time.

Yet some might ecstatically welcome the news that I have taken the savory breakfast to (personally) unheard of heights of creativity, deliciousness, and absurdity, by relying on a combination of know-how and what was once called health food.

This is not strictly vegan, as is my breakfast custom most days, but close enough. It took me a half hour, though most of that time I was in another room answering email and tinkering with my MP3 player.

I started with a cup of bulgur (coarse, I think, or at least medium), which I no longer soak (too fussy) but simmer; I did that it with a tablespoon or two of ground flax seed, which adds nothing to the dish but the warm fuzzy feeling you get from eating essential fatty acids.

Key, however, was the addition of a quarter cup or so of dried shredded coconut. (Yes unsweetened, of course.) And salt.

In another pan I heated some oil while I cut a half-brick of firm tofu into half-inch cubes; I had pressed the tofu a day or two earlier. I browned that tofu in that oil, with more salt.

When they were all done, I mixed them together, with soy sauce (in my case, about a tablespoon), fish sauce (non-vegan, but one teaspoon, and I swear it made the dish — though it would have been okay without it), and chopped scallions (optional; those who do not like raw onion products in the morning should skip them, with my supportive sympathy).

It's true I was hungry, but if this is health food, I'm even more of a convert than I sounded like six months ago; I've had less interesting grain dishes at some of the best restaurants in the world.

And now those of you who find this insane — have at it.

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bulgur, flax seed, Tofu

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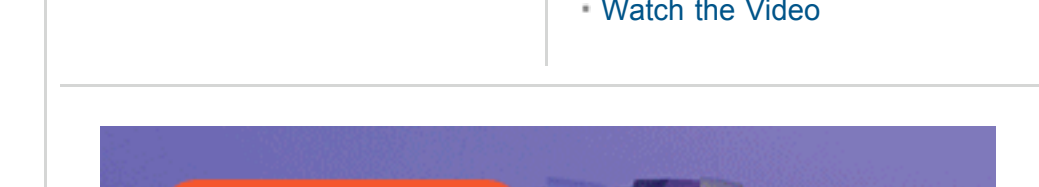
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"Hands down, my go-to potluck salad is my massaged kale salad."
"I love this simple watermelon salad: chunks of watermelon in an inverted stack; a sprinkle of barely toasted fennel seeds; topped with a knuckle of fresh goat or ricotta cheese; all dressed with a drizzle each of Cointreau, balsamic vinegar and olive oil."

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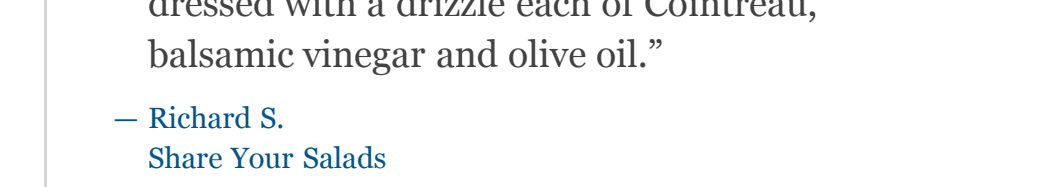
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About Mark Bittman and Bitten

Mark Bittman is the author of "How to Cook Everything," "Food Matters," a look at eating, personal and planetary health, and "Kitchen Express," a book inspired by the "101" articles written for The New York Times's Dining Section.



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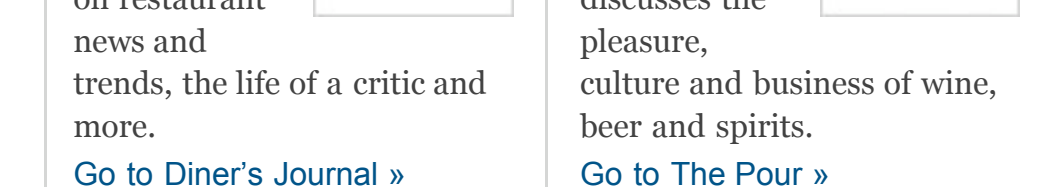
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