

Traditional Koliva Recipe

Ingredients

- 2 cups dried wheat berries (6 cups cooked)
- 8 cups water
- 1 1/3 cup toasted almond flour*
- 1/2 cup toasted sesame seeds
- 1 cup chopped walnuts
- 1/4 cup chopped fresh parsley
- 1 ripe pomegranate (approx. 1 cup pomegranate seeds)
- 1/2 cup golden raisins
- 2 cups powdered sugar

Decorative options – remember, must be edible!!!

(these are in addition to the amounts above if you also are using to decorate with)

- whole, blanched almonds**
- candy covered Jordan almonds
- golden raisins
- pomegranate seeds
- cinnamon sugar – equal parts cinnamon and granulated sugar
- dusting powder colors – mix 1 part dust to 4 parts granulated sugar
- silver dragees

Prep schedule– accommodates those who work weekdays:

2 days before memorial service

- *Morning*, - soak wheat all day;
- *Evening*, - boil wheat, drain, set out to dry overnight

1 day before

- *Morning* – transfer now dry cooked wheat into large bowl, cover and refrigerate;
- *Evening* – prep all additional ingredients; mix in with cooked wheat; plate wheat mixture; cover with toasted almond meal and pat down well/smoothly with wax paper: set out all decorative elements

Night before or morning of memorial service (before church)

- Cover plated wheat mixture with powdered sugar; smooth down with wax paper: decorate

Make ahead option:

You can go as far as mixing all the ingredients into the cooked wheat and keep in a Ziploc bag in the refrigerator for up to 3 days ahead. Then plate and decorate on the night before or morning of the memorial service.

Instructions

Soak wheat berries for approx. 8 hours or overnight in 10 cups of cold water. Drain, rinse and add to large pot with 8 cups cold water. Bring to a boil, lower to a simmer and cook for about an hour until soft but not mushy. Grains of wheat will begin to plump and almost split.

*Add a cinnamon stick, the peel of 1 orange or 1 tsp anise seeds to the boiling water for extra flavor.

Drain cooked wheat well and transfer to a clean, lint free towel or sheet laid on countertop. Spread wheat out in a single layer. Allow at least 3-4 hours to dry completely, preferably overnight. You can do this up to 3 days ahead and store, covered in the refrigerator.

Prep Mix-In Ingredients

- Lightly toast almond flour in frying pan over VERY low heat until just soft brown in color. This takes a few minutes and it may not seem like anything is happening but stir frequently and be careful not to burn! Set aside.
*If this is your first time, make sure you have double the almond flour amount on hand in case you accidentally over cook the first time ☺
- Lightly toast sesame seeds in frying pan over VERY low heat for max 3-4 minutes until the seeds just begin to release their sesame aroma. Set aside.
- Cut and de-seed pomegranate and set aside on paper towel to dry.
- Chop fresh parsley well and set aside. *Make sure to rinse parsley well and pat dry before chopping.
- Chop walnuts into small pieces and set aside.
- Break up golden raisins/sultanas, soak in boiling water for 15 min, set aside.

Once wheat is completely dry, transfer from towel/sheet to large bowl. Combine wheat with other ingredients **except the powdered sugar**.

Remember to reserve 2/3 cup toasted almond flour.

Mix gently and well to incorporate everything completely.

Transfer wheat mixture to bowl or platter of your choice and gently pat down. Cover with remaining 1 cup of toasted almond flour and pat down gently and well. A piece of wax paper does this job perfectly. Once the toasted almond flour has covered the wheat mixture completely and the wheat mixture is no longer visible, carefully sift powdered sugar over the almond flour. Pat down and smooth with wax paper.

Decorate as desired.

BE VERY CAREFUL transporting the koliva to church!
Consider decorating your koliva at church if you are going to make an intricate design – this is a great option and much less stressful!

* Alternate options include crushed paximadia, graham crackers breadcrumbs, or toasted chickpea flour:
If using zwiebacks (paximadia) or graham crackers, make sure these are crushed very fine. Remember that they will add to the overall sweetness of the koliva. If you prefer a less sweet finished dish, consider going with the breadcrumbs or toasted flours.

**Almonds (buy blanched or blanch at home – simply cover twice in boiling water emptying and rinsing with cold water between each boiled water bath and gently rub brown skins off with dish/paper towel)

This recipe makes approx. 7 cups of koliva which makes a large platter or koliva, more than ample for most memorial or funeral services. Half or even a quarter of this recipe is more appropriate for a Saturday of All Souls when many other people will also be bringing bowls.

If you're making koliva for a funeral or large memorial service, consider doubling (or tripling) the recipe and using a large sheet pan lined with lace paper doilies as an option.