

Bulgur Pilaf with Fennel, Raisins, and Pine Nuts (“The New Vegetarian Epicure” Anna Thomas)

2 medium yellow onions (2 cups chopped)
2 small fennel bulbs (1 ½ cups chopped)
2-3 cloves garlic, minced
2 Tbsp olive oil
salt and pepper to taste
2 cups bulgur
4 cups hot vegetable broth
½ cup golden raisins
½ cup pine nuts
Optional: 2 Tbsp: chopped fresh parsley or fennel greens

Peel and chop the onions. Trim the fennel bulbs, wash them carefully, and cut them into ½-inch dice. Saute the onions, fennel, and minced garlic in the olive oil, stirring often, until the vegetables take on a nice golden-brown color. Add some salt and pepper-more or less, depending on the saltiness of the broth you will use.

Add the dry bulgur and stir it in the hot pan with the vegetables for a few minutes. Then add the hot vegetable broth and the raisins.

Pour the whole mixture into a large casserole or gratin dish, cover tightly, and bake it in a 350 degree oven for 40 minutes.

Meanwhile, toast the pine nuts: Heat them in a small pan, stirring constantly, until they begin to brown. Do not turn away to answer the phone! This only takes a few moments, and they'll burn in an instant if you take your eyes off them. When they are toast-colored and give off a divine fragrance, just set them aside in a bowl.

After 40 minutes, when the pilaf is ready, remove the cover from the pilaf and check to make sure all the liquid has been absorbed. If not, leave it in the oven for a few more minutes. Then fluff the pilaf with a fork and stir in the toasted pine nuts. Sprinkle with the chopped fresh herbs if you like and serve hot.

Serves 10-12