

## Steaming Couscous Moroccan Style

by Amy Sherman

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If there is one thing you will eat in Morocco, it is couscous. It's traditionally served on Friday, but you can find it on menus every day of the week. The couscous in Morocco is light, soft, fluffy, and buttery, and is served with broth-based stews. Nothing like the instant couscous we eat in the U.S.

I got a chance to make couscous from scratch, starting with semolina at the cooking school at [Dar Les Cigognes](#) where the chef Fouzia (on the right) and resident manager Hayat (on the left) put me through the paces. I will never forget how much hard work it was to make! Rolling the couscous takes experience and is time consuming.

You roll it on a large earthenware dish with a rim called "ghassriya", combining semolina with semolina flour, water, and olive oil. You must soak it, break up the clumps, push it through a sieve, and steam it multiple times. In between steaming, if you rub the couscous again on the dish, the pasta burning your hands.

In Morocco, not everyone rolls couscous from scratch, but they certainly steam it, instead of dumping it in boiling water. If you can find non-instant couscous, it really tastes much better and fresher when steamed, not gummy. Sometimes it can be found in bulk bins, or use a 100% semolina brand, such as [Dari](#) which is very good when steamed.

If you want to make it from scratch, and you aren't planning a trip to Morocco anytime soon, I suggest using Moroccan cuisine expert [Paula Wolfert's instructions](#). Here are my easy instructions for steaming it, since most boxes do not explain how...

Steaming couscous will yield much, much more than dumping it in boiling water. By steaming it you will end up with 4 times as much couscous cooked, then when you started.

### Steamed Couscous

1 1/3 cups of couscous  
1 cup water  
1 Tablespoon olive oil  
1 Tablespoon unsalted butter  
salt

On a large rimmed baking sheet, combine the couscous with the water and stir with your hands to combine. Let sit for 10 minutes.

Break up the clumps of couscous and combine with a tablespoon of olive oil. On the stove boil salted water or broth in a pasta pot with a drainer insert. Transfer the couscous into the strainer, making sure it does not make contact with the water.

Steam it, with no lid, for 15 minutes, then transfer it back to the sheet pan and let it cool. Break up any clumps with your fingers and add another 1/4 cup of water, then return it to the pot and steam for another 20 minutes. Remove it from the pot and fluff it up with your fingers, add a tablespoon of butter and serve.

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