



Toasted Oatmeal! Yes, that is right, toasted oatmeal...oh-Mama, it is mm-mm-good!



Ingredient List:

- Old Fashioned Oatmeal (not instant) (any brand...I use Quaker)
- Hot water
- Sea Salt
- Honey (If I can find it, I like Orange Blossom or Tupelo Clover brands, but Aunt Sue or the Bear will do...locally produced and fresh is best if available)
- Cracked Pepper medley
- Cinnamon powder
- Kreta Reserve olive oil
- Milk, low-fat (1% or skim)
- Dried cranberries (I like Craisins...other dried or fresh fruits include raisins, mango, dates, figs, apples, and bananas as well as options like walnuts, pecans, or almond slivers)

Preparation Instructions for one serving:

- 1) Toast the oats. Take 1/2 to 3/4 cup of old fashioned oatmeal and place in a sauce pan. Turn heat to medium-high and stir until you smell the oats, then reduce heat to medium. Continue to turn the oats as pan toasting proceeds. When the oats have a slight brown color to some (not all) of the oats, the pan toasting process is complete.

Recipes for Kreta Reserve EVOO From the Kitchen of Rip Kirby

- 2) Add the hot water. Use 1 cup of hot water to flash steam the oats (a bit less water if you only used 1/2 cup of oatmeal). This reduces the overall amount of oatmeal "paste" that develops (which some people don't like) and allows the oats to be oats instead of mush. The water doesn't have to be boiling hot. You can nuke the water in the microwave to heat it up more than hot tap water. Stir the hot water and oats until the oats are thoroughly soaked and any lumps are gone. Reduce heat to low or medium low to simmer the oatmeal.
- 3) Add the salt. Add a pinch or two of salt. Beyond that level you are no longer making a low-sodium meal. The salt helps ionize the water which helps dissolve and emulsify other ingredients. Stir a couple of times.
- 4) Add the honey. You can measure the honey or eyeball it. If you were measuring it, the amount would be a tablespoon. If you are eyeballing, it is about a good 2-3 second squeeze drizzled around the pan. Stir and mix for a few seconds.
- 5) Add the pepper. You can use regular black peppercorns in a pepper mill, but I like to use the McCormick brand Pepper Medley which has a few other types of peppercorns in it. Crack about 3-4 turns of fresh pepper into the mix and stir.
- 6) Add the cinnamon powder. According to my Mother, cinnamon is a healthy heart spice. I have no idea if she is right or not, but I like cinnamon and she is my Mother, so I use cinnamon a lot. In this case, add a couple of good shakes of cinnamon to the mix and stir until the powder is evenly dispersed into the oatmeal.
- 7) Add Kreta Reserve Olive Oil. Add 1 to 2 tablespoons of Kreta Reserve Olive Oil. Stir for a minute or two until the streaks of oil have emulsified into the oatmeal. At this point, you have basic oatmeal that is ready to eat. The rest of the ingredients simply add texture and different tastes into the oatmeal for the adventurous amongst us.
- 8) Add 1/4 cup of milk. Whether it is whole milk or skim milk (I use 1% low-fat), the real purpose of the milk is to add a bit of moisture for the dried fruit to be added next. In addition, if you like your oatmeal a bit on the creamy side, add the milk. Stir in the milk a couple of turns around the pan to eliminate any small puddles. Turn off the heat at this point.
- 9) Add the fruit. Whether you are using fresh or dried fruit, it is always the last step. For fresh fruit, like a banana, stir in the banana slices and let it sit so the bananas can absorb the heat. If you are adding dried fruit, like Craisins or apples, stir the mixture for an extra 20-30 seconds to make sure the dried fruit has enough time to absorb some heat and moisture. In all cases, let it sit for at least a minute to cool to a comfortable eating temperature.

Cooking and Plating Instructions:

If you are using oatmeal as part of a larger breakfast or brunch service, it is best to serve into bowls and cover to avoid loss of moisture and heat. Also, the oatmeal will continue to cook and thicken during this time, so if you are concerned about the time between ready-to-serve and consumption, add a bit more water initially to make the oatmeal less thick when cooking is complete.

- 1) Place the oatmeal in a bowl on a small plate with a spoon on the side.
- 2) Serve with cold orange juice and hot coffee.
- 3) For an additional healthy heart side dish, include a small plate of cold stone fruit like peaches, plums, or nectarines.
- 4) For a decadent side dish, toast a slice of multi-grain bread, drizzle some Kreta Reserve Olive Oil on it and spread a spoonful of orange marmalade on it.

For multiple servings, multiply recipe by that factor. Do not multiply the salt by more than 3.