

3 WAYS WITH... Grapes

Explore the savory side of this fall fruit.

BY ABBY SIMCHAK

GRAPES MAY BE SWEET, but they're a delightful addition to savory dishes, too. In fact, that's my favorite way to eat them; their crisp-juicy texture and fresh flavor make salty foods sing. I use them in everything from appetizers and side dishes to elegant main courses, as the recipes here show, and at this time of year, you should, too.

HOW TO CHOOSE: Look for grapes that are plump and firm with no bruising or broken skin. Avoid bunches with stems that are toughened or browned with age.

HOW TO STORE: Keep grapes in a perforated plastic or paper bag in the refrigerator vegetable bin for up to one week.

HOW TO PREP: There isn't much to prepping grapes aside from pulling them from the stem when you're ready to eat or cook them. Many varieties have a powdery white coating called "bloom," which is nature's way of keeping the grapes from drying out too quickly. To keep the bloom intact, wait to rinse your grapes until just before serving or cooking them.

Green, red, purple, or black, now's the time to grab all the grapes you can while they're at their plump, fragrant best.



wild rice with roasted grapes, pecans, and sage

Maple-glazed pecans and balsamic-roasted grapes elevate this wild rice side dish to delicious new heights. Look for balsamic glaze near the vinegars at the supermarket. **Serves 6 to 8**

- 1 cup wild rice
- Kosher salt
- 2 cups seedless grapes, preferably a mix of colors
- 1 Tbs. balsamic glaze
- 2 Tbs. unsalted butter
- 1 medium shallot, finely chopped (¼ cup)
- 1 cup pecans, toasted and coarsely chopped
- 1 Tbs. pure maple syrup
- 2 tsp. chopped fresh sage
- 1 Tbs. fresh lemon juice
- ½ tsp. freshly ground black pepper

Bring 1 quart of water to a boil in a 4-quart saucepan. Add the rice and 1 tsp. salt, turn the heat down to maintain a gentle simmer, cover, and cook until the grains are tender but not split open, 45 to 55 minutes. Drain in a colander.

Meanwhile, position a rack in the center of the oven and heat the oven to 350°F.

In an 8x8-inch baking dish, toss the grapes with the balsamic glaze and spread in a single layer. Roast until they're soft but still hold their shape, about 15 minutes. Set aside.

Melt the butter in the saucepan over medium heat. Add the shallot and cook, stirring occasionally, until softened, about 3 minutes. Stir in the pecans and syrup and cook until the syrup is absorbed, about 2 minutes. Remove from the heat and stir in 1 tsp. of the sage.

Add the rice, grapes, lemon juice, and pepper; stir gently to combine. Season to taste with salt and serve garnished with the remaining 1 tsp. sage.