

## Middle Eastern Green Wheat with Fresh Sumac Berries and Aged Feta

Green wheat, also known as frik or freekeh is a wonderful substitution for rice at your table.

One of the oldest known grains, it is indigenous to the middle east where it is harvested and roasted over open wood fires.

This method of cultivation gives the grains a wonderful smoky and rich gamy flavor that pairs wonderfully with any type of roast or fish. Sumac Berries can be found all throughout the middle east and add a delightful lemony tang to anything they anoint.

During the fall, you can find fresh sumac clusters at the farmer's market, but if they are not available dried sumac berries can be purchased in any good spice house and are just as potent after a good re-constitution.

2 cups green wheat  
2 minced shallots  
½ fennel bulb diced  
3 cloves sliced garlic  
1 fresh bay leaf  
1 sprig thyme  
2 teaspoons salt  
2 tablespoons olive oil  
4 cups water

¼ cup reserved fresh sumac berries (or 2 tablespoons dried sumac berries plumped in ½ cup of boiling water)  
¼ cup chopped parsley  
¼ cup chopped cilantro  
3 oz of good aged feta

Sweat the shallot, garlic, fennel and herbs in the olive oil with the salt until they are translucent. Now add in the greenwheat and stir for about a minute to slightly toast the grains and cover them in the aromatic oil. Pour in the greenwheat and bring to a boil, than cover the pot and turn the heat down to low, cooking the grains until all of the water is absorbed. Once the water has absorbed, fold in the fresh sumac berries and let rest for a minute or two. Before serving sprinkle the chopped parsley and cilantro over top and grate the feta all over the top of the dish.

Enjoy this heirloom staple of our culinary heritage, as humankind has done since 2300 B.C.

~~~ CHEF MATTHEW WEINGARTEN