Sardines stuffed with Bulgur, Currants and Almonds
(from a recipe in the Ottolenghi Cookbook)

- 100g medium bulgur (burghul) wheat (I used fine, leftover from my attempt at tabbouleh)
- 30g currants
- 30g slivered almonds, lightly toasted (original recipe used pistachio nuts)
- grated zest of 1 lemon
- 40ml lemon juice
- 2 tablespoons chopped flat-leaf parsley
- ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon ground allspice
- 3 tablespoons dried mint
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed
- 2 tablespoons pomegranate molasses
- 1 teaspoon caster (superfine) sugar
- 6 tablespoons olive oil
- 8 fresh sardines, scaled, boned and butterflied (I used a tray of sardine fillets)
- salt and black pepper
- lemon wedges to serve

1. Soak the bulgur in a bowl of cold water for about 20 minutes, until soft. Drain in a fine sieve and squeeze out any excess moisture.

2. In a separate bowl, soak the currants in a little warm water for five minutes, then drain.

3. Add the currants and almond slivers to the bulgur, along with the zest, juice and most of the chopped parsley, keeping back a little to garnish. Mix in the crushed garlic, spices, mint, molasses, sugar and 5 tablespoons of oil, then season with salt and pepper to taste. Try not to eat this with a spoon (which is what I found myself doing..)

4. In yet another bowl, mix the sardine fillets with 1 tablespoon of olive oil and season with salt and pepper. Preheat the oven to 180C.

5. Stuff the sardines by lying them on a plate skin-down, and spooning a little of the stuffing mixture into the middle of each fish. Roll the fillet around the stuffing and secure with a toothpick or cocktail skewer.

6. Arrange the sardines on a baking tray lined with parchment and roast for 5 - 6 minutes, until just cooked through. My sardine fillets were quite small, so I scattered all the excess stuffing around the rolls prior to baking in the oven. Serve scattered with the remaining parsley and accompanied by the lemon wedges.

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