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Steel Cut Oats with Spiced Apple Topping

(Recipe from America's Test Kitchen: Family Cookbook)

Ingredients for the oats:

- 3 cups water
- 1 cup of milk
- 1 tbsp. unsalted butter
- 1 cup steel-cut oats
- ¼ tsp. fine kosher or sea salt
- ¼ cup dried cranberries (or raisins), optional

Ingredients for the apple topping:

- 1 tbsp. unsalted butter
- 1 ½ lbs. apples, peeled, cored and roughly chopped
- 1 ½ cups packed light brown sugar
- 1/8 tsp. ground ginger
- ¼ tsp. ground cinnamon
- Pinch of fine kosher or sea salt

Directions for the oats:

- Bring the water and milk to a simmer in a large saucepan over medium heat
- Meanwhile, melt the butter in a medium skillet over medium heat and toast the oats in the butter until golden and fragrant, stirring frequently, about 2-4 minutes
- Stir the toasted oats into the simmering liquid and reduce heat to medium-low and simmer gently until almost all of the liquid is absorbed, stirring occasionally, about 20 minutes
- Stir in the salt and continue to simmer, stirring frequently to prevent any scorching on the bottom, for about another 10 minutes, or until the oatmeal is thick and creamy
- Remove from heat and stir in the cranberries or raisins, if using, and let sit for 5 minutes
- Serve with apple topping over the top (or stir in brown sugar or maple syrup if not using the topping)

Directions for the apple topping:

- Melt 1 tbsp. butter in a large skillet over medium-high heat
- Add in the apples, brown sugar, ginger, cinnamon and salt and stir to combine

- Cook until the apples have softened and browned, about 5 minutes, stirring frequently, and turning down the heat if necessary to prevent a bubble-over
- Serve over warm oatmeal (or over ice cream! Yum!)