

Iranian Barberry Rice / Zereshk Polow

Ingredients

- **4 cups** basmati rice, rinsed
- **3 tbsp** salt, plus 1 tsp salt extra
- **3 pinches** saffron threads
- sugar
- **½ tsp** turmeric
- **¼ tsp** sweet paprika
- **½ tsp** baharat
- **¼ tsp** pepper
- **2** garlic cloves, crushed
- **1 tbsp** lemon juice
- **250 ml** hot water
- **1** chicken, quartered
- **1** onion, sliced
- olive oil
- **1 large** potato, sliced (like potato scallops)
- **4 tbsp** butter
- **1 cup** dried barberries, rinsed
- **2 tbsp** almonds, cut into slivers, for decoration
- **2 tbsp** pistachios, cut into slivers, for decoration



Instructions

Soaking time 1 hour

Put the rice and salt in a bowl and cover with water. Soak for 1–2 hours.

Meanwhile, place the saffron and a generous pinch of sugar in a mortar and grind to a fine powder. Place in a cup and fill three-quarters full with hot water. Set aside.

Combine the spices, pepper and extra salt in a small bowl. Add the garlic, lemon juice, hot water and 1 tbsp of the saffron water. Stir well.

Preheat the oven to 160°C. Place the chicken in a deep baking tray. Scatter with the onion and pour over the spice and garlic mixture. Cover with foil and bake for 1 hour.

Drain the rice, add to a pot or large saucepan and cover with water. Add 2–3 tbsp of olive oil if desired to stop the grains sticking to each other. Boil the rice for 10–15 minutes or until al dente. Drain in a colander.

Put the pot back on the stove and add 3–4 tbsp of oil. Lay the sliced potato in the base (to protect the rice, but also to create a delicious edible crust of rice and potato). Top with the drained rice and cover with a lid. Cook until the rice begins to steam (about 3–5 minutes), then turn the heat to low and wrap the lid in a tea towel (covering the underside) and place back on the pot. The tea towel catches the condensation, stopping it from dripping back onto the rice. Leave to steam for 45–60 minutes. By the end you should have perfect, fluffy, separated rice.

Heat half the butter in a frying pan and add the barberries. Sauté for a few minutes then add 2 tbsp of sugar and 2 tbsp of the saffron water. Stir briefly then remove from the heat.

Place a layer of rice on a serving platter, followed by a sprinkling of barberries, nuts and a little saffron water. Keep layering, mounding up into the shape of a cone. Leave some barberries and nuts for the top. Melt the remaining butter and mix together in a bowl with the remaining saffron water. Mix in a cup of rice.

Arrange the chicken quarters around the platter then spoon the saffron rice on top of the mound. Add a final sprinkling of barberries and nuts.

You can also find this recipe online at: <http://www.sbs.com.au/food/recipes/barberry-rice-zereshk-polow>