

Steamed Rice with Cumin + Potatoes

zireh polow-ye kermani

Serves 6

Prep: 15 minutes

Cooking: 1 hour

- 2 cups/400g basmati rice, soaked for 30 minutes, drained and rinsed
- ½ cup/120ml oil or ghee
- 2 medium onions, peeled and thinly sliced
- 1lb/450g potatoes, peeled and diced into 1in/2.5cm cubes
- 4 tablespoons black cumin seeds
- 1 tablespoon fine sea salt
- 2 teaspoons turmeric or ½ teaspoon ground saffron
- 4 cups/960ml homemade chicken broth or water

I adapted this recipe from Mah-Gol Bagherpour, a wonderful cook at Shahin and Homayoun Sarlati's house in Kerman.

1. Heat ¼ cup/60ml oil in a large non-stick size pot over medium heat and sauté the onions until lightly golden brown. Add the potatoes, cumin, salt, and turmeric, and sauté for 5 minutes. Add the rice and sauté for 1 minute.
2. Add the broth and bring to a boil over high heat. Gently stir the rice with a wooden spoon a few times while it boils.
3. Reduce heat to *medium*, cover and simmer for 20 minutes over medium heat.
4. When the rice has absorbed all the water, swirl the remaining oil over the rice. Reduce heat to low. Wrap the lid of the pot with a clean dish towel and cover firmly to prevent steam from escaping. Cook for 25 minutes longer.
5. Remove the pot from heat and allow to cool for 5 minutes on a damp surface without uncovering it.
6. Gently taking one skimmer or spatula full of rice at a time, place it on a serving platter without disturbing the crust. Mound rice in shape of a cone. Serve with a fresh herb platter and a Tomato, Cucumber, and Herb Salad (page 523) *Nush-e joon!*

VARIATIONS

Steamed Rice with Cumin + Butternut Squash

kahi pila-ye mazandarani

Replace the potatoes in step 2 with 3lb/1.2kg of butternut squash, peeled and diced into 1-inch/2.5cm cubes. Add 1 cup raisins (soaked in 3 cups water and drained), one 4-inch cinnamon stick, and 1-inch fresh ginger and 2 cloves garlic, peeled and grated, with the rest of the ingredients in step 2. Reduce cumin to 2 tablespoons.

Persian Gulf Rice + Tomatoes

sholeh-ye tamata-ye junubi

Replace the broth in step 3 of main recipe above with a mixture of 4 cups/900g tomato puree (6 medium tomatoes) and ½ cup water; 2in/5cm fresh ginger, peeled and grated, and 1 tablespoon dried ground rose petals. Reduce cumin to 2 tablespoons. Everything else remains the same.

