

Serves 4 to 6
Prep: 10 minutes plus 30
minutes soaking
Cooking: 35 minutes

STOVE-TOP PLAIN RICE (KATEH)

3 cups (600 g)
white basmati rice
5½ cups (1.3 liters) water
1 tablespoon sea salt
¼ cup (60 ml) olive oil

This is a very simple way to make wonderful rice in only 30 minutes. It is a technique favored around the Caspian, where rice is eaten for breakfast, lunch, and dinner.

1. Wash the rice by placing it in a large container and covering it with water. Agitate gently with your hand, then pour off the water. Repeat 5 times until the water is no longer cloudy. Soak for 30 minutes. Drain, using a fine-mesh colander. If using American long-grain rice, do not wash or soak, and reduce the water to 4½ cups instead of 5½ cups.
2. In a medium-sized pot or saucepan, combine the rice, water, and salt. Gently stir with a wooden spoon to dissolve the salt.
3. Bring to a boil over high heat (this takes about 5 minutes), then reduce heat to medium and simmer, uncovered, for 15 to 20 minutes, or until all the water has been absorbed and the surface of the rice is covered with steam holes.
4. Drizzle the oil over the rice. Cover the pot tightly, the lid wrapped in a clean dish towel, and steam for 15 minutes over low heat. Keep warm until ready to serve.
5. Just before serving, uncover the rice and fluff gently with a fork.
Nush-e joon!

RICE WITH CILANTRO (DAMI-E GISHNIZ)

In step 4, add 3 cups chopped fresh cilantro with the oil and fluff with two forks.

RICE WITH CUMIN (ZIREH POLOW)

In step 2, add 3 tablespoons black cumin seeds and 1 teaspoon turmeric with the rice, water, and salt. Continue with step 3.

BROWN BASMATI RICE

For brown basmati rice, use 7 cups water instead of 5½ cups and increase the cooking time in step 4 to 30 minutes.

