

Persian Jeweled Rice (Version 1)

New York Times

Time: 1 hour 15 minutes

Serves: 6

2 cups best quality Basmati rice
Kosher salt
Unsalted butter, 6 tablespoons in total
1 large onion, diced small
¼ teaspoon saffron threads crumbled and soaked in ¼ cup hot water
Large pinch ground cinnamon
Large pinch ground cardamom
Large pinch ground allspice
Large pinch ground black pepper
Large pinch ground cumin
1/3 cup chopped dried apricots
1/3 cup golden raisins or currants
1/3 cup dried imported barberries or goji berries, soaked in warm water for 5 minutes and drained (or use 1/3 cup dried cherries or dried cranberries)
1/3 cup blanched slivered almonds
1/3 cup roughly chopped pistachios



Photography:
Stephen Scott Gross for The New York Times

1. Rinse the rice several times in cold water until the water runs clear. Drain. Bring 3 quarts water to a boil in a large pot with 2 tablespoons kosher salt. Add the rinsed rice and boil, stirring occasionally, for 5 minutes, then drain well in a colander.
2. Heat 1 tablespoon butter in a small skillet over medium heat. Add the onion, season lightly with salt and cook until softened and lightly colored, 4 to 5 minutes. (HdeH longer over medium high heat). Moisten with 1 tablespoon saffron water and stir in the cinnamon, cardamom, allspice, black pepper and cumin. Cook for 1 minute more. Stir in the apricots, raisins (or currants) and barberries (or use cherries or cranberries).
3. Melt 4 tablespoons butter in a heavy-bottomed enamel or nonstick Dutch oven or cast iron pan over medium heat. Spread half the par-cooked rice over the bottom of the pot. Spoon over the onion-fruit mixture, then the remaining rice. Leave the pot on the flame (medium to medium-low), uncovered, for 5 to 8 minutes to gently brown the rice. (Do not stir or move the rice – you will need to rely on your nose to tell if the rice has browned.)
4. Drizzle the remaining saffron water over the rice and put on the lid. Adjust the heat to very low and leave undisturbed for 30 minutes. Turn off the heat and let rest at least 10 minutes.
5. Heat the remaining 1 tablespoon butter in a small skillet over medium-low heat and gently toast the almonds and pistachios for a minute or so, taking care not to get them too brown. Set aside for garnish.
6. To serve, spoon the rice into a wide bowl or platter. With a spatula, carefully lift the bottom crust, placing the crisp side up. Sprinkle with the toasted nuts.