

JEWELLED RICE

6 SERVINGS Yes, making this rice is a time commitment and a labor of love. But the ingredients aren't difficult to find, and the finished dish is stunning.

- ¾ cup unsalted, shelled raw natural pistachios
- ¾ cup slivered almonds
- 2 cups basmati rice
- Kosher salt
- 1 orange
- ½ cup sugar
- 2 medium carrots, peeled, cut into matchstick-size pieces
- ¾ cup dried barberries or ½ cup dried cranberries
- ¾ cup raisins
- ¼ tsp. saffron threads
- 2 Tbsp. unsalted butter
- 4 Tbsp. olive oil, divided
- 1 medium onion, finely chopped
- ¼ tsp. ground cardamom
- ¼ tsp. ground cumin
- ¼ tsp. ground turmeric

INGREDIENT INFO: Dried barberries, sold as zereshk, are available at Middle Eastern markets and kalustyans.com.

Preheat oven to 350°. Spread pistachios on a rimmed baking sheet and toast until just beginning to brown, about 4 minutes. Transfer to a plate, let cool, then coarsely chop. Spread almonds on the same baking sheet and toast until golden brown, 5–8 minutes; let cool. Set nuts aside.

Place rice in a fine-mesh sieve and rinse under cold water until water runs clear. Cook rice in a large pot of boiling salted water, stirring occasionally, until grains have lengthened but are still firm, 6–7 minutes; drain and rinse under cold water. Spread rice on another rimmed baking sheet; let cool.

Meanwhile, using a vegetable peeler, remove zest from orange and thinly slice lengthwise (reserve flesh for another use). Bring sugar and 1 cup water to a boil in a medium saucepan, stirring to dissolve sugar. Add orange zest and carrots, reduce heat, and simmer, stirring occasionally, until carrots are tender, 15–20 minutes; drain and set aside (discard syrup).

Combine barberries and raisins in a small bowl and cover with hot water; let soak 10 minutes. Drain and set aside. Place saffron in another small bowl and add ¼ cup hot water; set aside.

Heat butter and 1 Tbsp. oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add onion, season

cardamom, cumin, turmeric, and 1 Tbsp. saffron mixture. Cook, stirring constantly, until fragrant, about 1 minute.

Reduce heat to low, add barberries and raisins, and cook, stirring often, about 3 minutes. Stir in reserved nuts and orange zest and carrot mixture; season with salt. Set fruit and nut mixture aside.

Heat remaining 3 Tbsp. oil in a large wide heavy pot over medium heat. Add half of rice, spreading evenly; top with fruit and nut mixture, then remaining rice, spreading evenly. Using the end of a wooden spoon, poke 5–6 holes in rice all the way through to bottom of pot (to help release steam and help rice cook evenly).

Drizzle remaining saffron mixture over rice. Place a clean kitchen towel over pot, cover with a tight-fitting lid, and secure loose edges of towel on top of lid, using a rubber band or masking tape.

Cook until pot begins to steam, 5–8 minutes. Reduce heat to very low and cook, without stirring, until rice is tender and bottom layer of rice is browned and crisp, 30–40 minutes.

Scoop rice into a wide serving bowl, breaking bottom crust into pieces.

DO AHEAD: Fruit and nut mixture can be made 2 days ahead. Cover fruit and nut mixture and remaining saffron mixture separately and chill.

GRILLED SAFFRON RACK OF LAMB

6 SERVINGS The lamb needs to marinate overnight, so be sure to start 1 day ahead.

- 2 racks of lamb (3–3½ lb. total), rib bones frenched
- Kosher salt, freshly ground pepper
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed
- 1 cup plain 2% fat Greek yogurt
- 2 Tbsp. olive oil
- 1 tsp. finely grated lemon zest
- ½ tsp. saffron threads, finely crumbled

Season lamb with salt and pepper and place each rack of lamb in a large resealable plastic bag. Whisk garlic, yogurt, oil, lemon zest, and saffron in a small bowl and divide between bags. Seal bags, pressing out excess air; turn to coat. Refrigerate lamb overnight.

Prepare grill for medium-high, indirect heat. (For a charcoal grill, bank coals on 1 side of grill; for a gas grill, leave 1 burner turned off.) Remove lamb from marinade

part of grill as needed to avoid flare-ups, until browned all over, 8–10 minutes.

Move lamb to cooler part of grill. Cover grill and cook lamb, turning occasionally, until an instant-read thermometer inserted into the center registers 125° for medium-rare, about 15 minutes longer.

Let lamb rest 10 minutes. Cut into individual chops.

ROSE WATER SHORTBREAD COOKIES

MAKES ABOUT 3 DOZEN Rice flour gives these cookies a very fine texture, and also results in a gluten-free dessert. Letting the dough rest allows the flour to absorb moisture, making it less crumbly and easier to handle.

- ½ tsp. ground cardamom
- 1½ cups white rice flour plus more for rolling
- ¾ cup powdered sugar
- ½ cup (1 stick) unsalted butter, room temperature
- 1 large egg
- 1 tsp. rose water
- 1 tsp. poppy seeds

INGREDIENT INFO: Rice flour is available at natural foods stores, and rose water at Middle Eastern markets. Both can be found at specialty foods stores and some supermarkets.

Whisk cardamom and 1½ cups flour in a medium bowl and set aside. Using an electric mixer, beat sugar and butter in a medium bowl until smooth. Add egg and rose water and beat to blend.

Reduce mixer to low speed; gradually mix in dry ingredients (dough will be stiff). Cover and chill at least 6 hours or overnight.

Preheat oven to 300°. Scoop level tablespoons of dough and, using lightly floured hands, roll into balls. Place on parchment-lined baking sheets, spacing about 1½" apart. Using a fork or another utensil that can make a decorative pattern in dough, flatten balls to a ¼" thickness. (Alternatively, flatten balls and make an indentation in the centers with your thumb.) Sprinkle cookies with poppy seeds.

Bake cookies until firm but still pale, 20–25 minutes. Transfer to wire racks; let cool.

DO AHEAD: Cookies can be baked 5 days ahead. Store airtight at room temperature.