

Zamarud Pilau (Rice with Spinach)

This is an **Afghanistani**¹ dish.

Subtle aromatic spicy rice cooked in a style similar to the **Bangladeshi**²/ **Indian**³ **Biryani**.

Quantities are for 6 generous portions.

Ingredients

300 gm **FAIRTRADE** basmati brown rice
sunflower oil
2 medium white onions
4 chicken breasts
250 ml water

10 ml **char masala**⁴
500 gm frozen spinach
3 leeks
10 ml ground coriander
1.5 Litres cold water
1 **FAIRTRADE** lemon
300 ml hot water
fresh green chilli peppers

Method

Preparation

Weigh out the rice, wash well under running cold water, and then soak in plenty of cold water for at least 30 minutes for up to 2 to 3 hours.

Skin and chop the onions.

De-frost the spinach.

Top and tail the leeks, removing any very green parts, wash them thoroughly, and slice into 1 cm rounds.

Cut the chicken into portions, or further into cubes if you prefer.

Top, tail, de-seed and chop fine the chilli peppers.

Cooking

Pre-heat the oven to Gas Mark 3.

Using a pan which will go both on the stove top and in the oven, heat a little oil and fry 5 ml of char masala spice mixture for 2 to 3 minutes.

Add the onions and stir fry until browning.

Add the chicken and continue to fry until the meat is sealed.

Add a good pinch of salt and as much ground **FAIRTRADE** black pepper as you enjoy.

Add 250 ml water, bring to the boil, turn down to simmer, and simmer for 25 minutes until the meat is cooked through.

Whilst the chicken is cooking, put the 1.5 litres of water in a large saucepan and start it heating through to a boil.

Now heat a little more oil in another saucepan and fry the leeks gently until they are well softened.

Add the de-frosted spinach and heat through and then add the ground coriander.

Mix well, and cover the pan. Simmer for 5 minutes or so until the leeks and spinach are well cooked.

Whilst the spinach is cooking and when the water is up to the boil, drain the rice and put it in the boiling water.

¹<http://www.fairtradecookbook.org.uk/countries/afghanistan.htm>

²<http://www.fairtradecookbook.org.uk/countries/bangladesh.htm>

³<http://www.fairtradecookbook.org.uk/countries/india.htm>

⁴http://www.fairtradecookbook.org.uk/recipes/char_masala.htm

Let it come back to the boil, and parboil for 3 minutes, maybe 4 minutes if it had a short (30 minutes) soak.

Drain the rice and mix the rice and spinachy leeks together with the lemon juice and another 5 ml of char masala.

Add the rice mix to the cooked chicken and add a further 250 ml of boiling water.

Gently turn the mixture to even out the components. Cover, and bake in the pre-heated oven at Gas Mark 3 for (minimum 30 minutes) up to 45 minutes.

To serve

Turn the mixture out onto a serving platter and garnish with the fresh chillis.

Variations

Replace 100 ml of the initial cooking water with 100 ml **FAIRTRADE** white wine.

If you have diners who have trouble with hot chilli spice, then omit the chilli spice garnish and serve with **Fair Trade** Lime Pickles as a relish.