

Plain Basmati Rice

Riz Basmati (riz-bus-ma-tee)

serves 4

The fragrance that fills the air while preparing this rice is heavenly. This long-grained rice is well known for the perfume-like aroma it releases as it steams. This basic recipe and those that follow provide seven delicious combinations of basmati rice.

Specialty ingredients: Basmati rice, preferably Indian or Pakistani, found at specialty markets or online.

Prepare ahead: You can prepare this up to 3 days in advance. Refrigerate covered. Serve as directed.

For plain basmati rice

1 cup basmati rice

2 cups water

1/2 teaspoon salt

1 tablespoon butter

To prepare plain basmati rice

Rinse the rice in a fine-mesh strainer under cold running water for about 15 seconds. Drain well. Stir the rice, water, salt, and butter together in a medium saucepan and bring to a boil over high heat, uncovered. Once it comes to a rolling boil, allow the water to reduce until it is level with the grains of rice. Reduce the heat to medium-low and simmer covered for 10 minutes, or until all the moisture is absorbed. Remove from the heat and set aside, covered. After 20 minutes fluff with a fork, separating the grains. Serve warm.

{Variation}

Basmati Rice with Saffron (**Riz Basmati ma**

Zafaron): Follow the recipe and procedure above to prepare the plain basmati rice, except add 1/2 teaspoon saffron threads with the water, salt, and butter. Serve warm.

{Basmati Rice Pilafs}

Preparing Basmati Rice Pilafs

For best results, do not exceed 3 cups of rice in a pot at one time. When preparing 2 or 3 cups, increase the cooking time and slightly increase the cooking temperature. Make certain all of the water is completely absorbed before removing the pot from the heat. Let stand covered for at least 40 minutes prior to fluffing with a fork.

When preparing any of the following seasoned basmati rice dishes, after folding the additional ingredients into the plain basmati rice, let the pilaf stand covered for about 30 minutes to allow the flavors to develop.

Basmati Rice with Red Bell Pepper and Peas

For the basmati rice with red bell pepper and peas

1 recipe plain Basmati Rice (recipe above)
1 teaspoon extra-virgin olive oil
1/2 cup diced red bell pepper (1/4 inch)
1/2 cup frozen peas (thawed)
1/4 teaspoon salt
1 tablespoon lightly salted butter (optional)

To prepare the basmati rice with red bell pepper and peas

Prepare the plain Basmati Rice as described above, and set it aside for 20 minutes prior to folding in the red bell-pea mixture. Preheat the oil in a small skillet over high heat. Add the red bell, peas, and salt and cook for about a minute or two. Add the butter, then pour the mixture over the prepared rice, and gently fold it into the rice using a flexible spatula. Set aside covered. Serve warm.

Basmati Rice with Craisins and Toasted Pistachio

For the basmati rice with craisins and toasted pistachio

1 recipe plain Basmati Rice (recipe above)
1 teaspoon extra-virgin olive oil
1/2 cup craisins
1/2 cup toasted pistachio
1 tablespoon lightly salted butter (optional)

*(To toast the pistachio, place them on a foil lined sheet pan and place on the middle rack of a pre-heated oven, 350F for 10 minutes.)

To prepare the basmati rice with craisins and toasted pistachio

Prepare the plain Basmati Rice as described above, and set it aside for 20 minutes prior to folding in the craisin and pistachio mixture. Preheat the oil in a small skillet over high heat. Add the craisins, cook and stir for a minute or two. Once they seem inflated, add the pistachio and butter. Mix well, then pour the mixture over

the prepared rice, and gently fold it into the rice using a flexible spatula. Set aside covered. Serve warm.

Basmati Rice with Green Onions

Riz Basmati ma Bussel Ukhdar (riz bus-ma-tee ma-bus-sul ukhh-dar)

For the basmati rice with green onions

1 recipe plain Basmati Rice (recipe above)
2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
1/2 cup coarsely chopped green onion; use light and dark green parts
2 tablespoons finely chopped dill
1/4 teaspoon salt

To prepare the basmati rice with green onions

Prepare the plain Basmati Rice as described above, and set it aside for 20 minutes prior to folding in the onion-dill mixture. Preheat the oil in a small skillet over medium heat. Add the onion, dill, and salt. Reduce the heat to medium-low and cook until the onions are tender. Pour the mixture over the prepared rice, and gently fold it into the rice using a flexible spatula. Set aside covered. Serve warm

Basmati Rice with Toasted Noodles

Riz Basmati ma Shireeyee (riz bus-ma-tee ma shy-ree-ye)

Special ingredients: Angel hair nests (not angel hair pasta) can be found in specialty markets or online, while cut fideo-fideo cortado (not coiled) sometimes called cut fideo-fideos cortos (not coiled), can be found in most grocery stores in the pasta section or at shopkamal.com

For the basmati rice with toasted noodles

1 recipe plain Basmati Rice (recipe above)
2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
1/2 cup angel hair nests, broken into pieces (not angel hair pasta)
or: cut fideo-fideo cortado (not coiled)
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/2 cup boiling water

To prepare the basmati rice with toasted noodles

Prepare the plain Basmati Rice as described above and set it aside for 20 minutes prior to folding in the toasted noodles. Preheat the olive oil in a small skillet over medium high heat. Add the noodle pieces and salt and pan roast the noodles, stirring constantly. Once they begin to brown, reduce the heat to medium-low. Keep pan-roasting the noodles until they are reddish in color. Carefully add 1/2 cup boiling water (caution: It will splatter). Increase the heat to high and cook until most of the water is absorbed. Remove from the heat, cover, and set aside for 10 minutes, then gently fold the toasted noodles into the rice using a flexible spatula. Set aside covered. Serve warm.

Basmati Rice with Cumin, Lentils, and Onion

Riz Basmati ma Addas (riz bus-ma-tee ma ud-dus)

For the basmati rice with cumin, lentils, and onion

1 recipe plain Basmati Rice (recipe above)
1/4 cup lentils
3 cups water
1/4 teaspoon and 1/2 teaspoon salt, divided
3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
1/2 cup diced yellow onion (1/4 inch)
1/4 cup golden raisins
1/4 cup coarsely chopped green onion; use light and dark green parts
3/4 teaspoon cumin

To prepare the basmati rice with cumin, lentils, and onion

Prepare the plain Basmati Rice as described above, and set it aside for 20 minutes prior to folding in the cumin-lentil-onion mixture. Meanwhile, place the lentils, water, and 1/4 teaspoon salt in a medium saucepan over high heat, uncovered. Bring to a rolling boil, then reduce the heat to medium-high and cook uncovered for 10 to 12 minutes or until the lentils are tender. Drain the lentils and set them aside, uncovered. Preheat the oil in the same medium saucepan over medium heat. Add the yellow onion and 1/2 teaspoon salt, and saute until the onions are tender. Add the raisins and cook them until they seem inflated. Then add the green onions, cumin, and drained lentils. Mix together for about a minute. Pour this mixture over the prepared rice, and gently fold it into the rice using a flexible spatula. Serve lightly warm or at room temperature.