

# Persian Rice

## Overview

Parboil 3 cups rice for 10 minutes precisely, then rinse with cold water and set in a colander. Drain well.

Layer the rice with butter or oil, herbs, spices, savorys, or other ingredients.

Steam the rice for 30–35 minutes to finish.

## Ingredients

3 cups rice;  
4 tablespoons butter;  
Salt;  
3/4 cup lentils;  
1/4 cup slivered almonds;  
1/4 cup Zante currants or raisins;  
Cinnamon;  
Or see below for variations.

## Directions

### Parboil the rice and the lentils:

Bring a large pot of salted water to a rolling boil. Add the rice. Stir once and boil for 10 minutes by the clock.

Pour the rice into a colander and rinse very well under cold running water.

Set the colander of rice aside to drain thoroughly.

Boil the lentils in salted water to cover for about 10 minutes, until tender but not soft. Drain.

Adapted from *Persian Cooking: A Table of Exotic Delights*, by Nesta Ramazani.  
Published by Quadrangle / The New York Times Book Company, 1974.

### Layer the ingredients:

In a large saucepan with a lid, melt the butter.

Spoon in 1/3 of the drained rice.

Top with 1/3 of the lentils, 1/3 of the almonds, 1/3 of the currants, and a sprinkling of cinnamon.

Continue alternating layers of rice and other ingredients.

### Steam the rice to finish:

Wrap the lid of the saucepan with a clean kitchen cloth. (This prevents the water that condenses on the lid from dripping back down onto the rice.)

Place the saucepan over medium-low heat and steam the rice for 30–35 minutes. Thereafter, reduce the heat to very low and keep the rice warm until you're ready to serve it.

### Serve the rice:

Lift the rice out of the saucepan with a slotted spoon, fluffing it as you place it in a serving dish. A crunchy crust will have formed on the bottom of the rice; you can break it up and incorporate it into the rice as you go. To serve it in one piece instead, immerse the outside of the saucepan for a few minutes in cold water and pry it out with a spatula.

## Variations

Substitute olive oil for the butter for a vegan dish.

Instead of the lentils, almonds, currants, and cinnamon:

Soak 1 teaspoon of saffron in warm water for a few minutes. Layer the rice with saffron and some or all of: almonds, pistachios, cashews, currants, golden raisins, and chopped dried apricots.

Parcook fresh or frozen green peas. Layer the rice with peas, chopped parsley, chopped cilantro, chopped dill, and chopped scallions (green part only).

Cook chick peas in butter with chopped cilantro, chopped parsley, minced garlic and salt. Layer with the rice, with cinnamon and a sprinkling of lemon juice.