



JEWELLED PILAV

INGREDIENTS

(Serves 4-6)

- 1.5 mugs (1 mug roughly measures 300ml) pilavlik rice or long grain rice
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 2 tbsp butter
- 1 medium onion, diced
- 4 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 2 tbsp pine nuts
- 2 tbsp pistachios, roughly chopped
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- 1 tsp ground allspice
- ½ tsp ground black pepper

- 1 tsp dried oregano
- 1 tsp dried mint
- 2 tbsp raisins
- 2 tbsp dried apricots, chopped
- Salt

TO PREPARE THE PEPPERS

- 6 small squat red peppers
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tbsp pekmez, pomegranate molasses or honey
- To serve, crumbled tulum or feta cheese and olives

Serve this Ottoman inspired pilav rice, studded with dried fruit and nuts, as an accompaniment to grilled meats, stews or simply with salad. It's also used to stuff vine leaves or any vegetable that can be scooped out and filled. Peppers are the least fiddly option – to stuff 6 small squat peppers you will only need half the quantity of pilav in this recipe. In mountain villages, cracked bulgar wheat is used in the place of rice.

- 1 Wash the rice in cold water until the water runs clear. Drain and set to one side. Heat the olive oil and butter in a medium-sized pan and sauté the onion, garlic, pine nuts and pistachios until golden. Stir in the spices and herbs, add the rice and stir together for a couple of minutes until the rice is well-coated in the spice mixture.
- 2 Add 1.5 mugs of cold water, the raisins and chopped apricots. Season with salt to taste, cover the pan and simmer over a low heat until all the water has been absorbed and the rice is just soft (approximately 10 minutes). Leave the rice to stand in the covered pan for 5-10 minutes before fluffing with a fork to separate the grains and serving.
- 3 To make stuffed peppers, cut the tops off, scoop out the seeds and pierce the bottom of each 4 times with the point of the knife. Fill with pilav, cover with the cut tops and place sitting upright in a saucepan.
- 4 Pour a mug of boiling water around the peppers and add the olive oil and pekmez to the water. Cover the pan and simmer over a low heat for 35-40 minutes until the peppers are tender. Spoon any of the sauce left in the pan over the peppers before serving with olives and crumbled tulum-style cheese or feta.