

Rice and Lentils with Crispy Onions (Mujaddara)

COOK'S
ILLUSTRATED

INGREDIENTS

YOGURT SAUCE

- 1 cup plain whole-milk yogurt
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- ½ teaspoon minced garlic
- ½ teaspoon salt

RICE AND LENTILS

- 8 ½ ounces (1 ¼ cups) green or brown lentils, picked over and rinsed
- Salt and pepper
- 1 ¼ cups basmati rice
- 1 recipe Crispy Onions, plus 3 tablespoons reserved oil (see related content)
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 teaspoon ground coriander
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon ground allspice
- ⅛ teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 3 tablespoons minced fresh cilantro

INSTRUCTIONS

SERVES 4 TO 6

Do not substitute smaller French lentils for the green or brown lentils. When preparing the Crispy Onions (see related content), be sure to reserve 3 tablespoons of the onion cooking oil for cooking the rice and lentils.

1. FOR THE YOGURT SAUCE: Whisk all ingredients together in bowl. Refrigerate while preparing rice and lentils.

2. FOR THE RICE AND LENTILS: Bring lentils, 4 cups water, and 1 teaspoon salt to boil in medium saucepan over high heat. Reduce heat to low and cook until lentils are tender, 15 to 17 minutes. Drain and set aside. While lentils cook, place rice in medium bowl and cover by 2 inches with hot tap water; let stand for 15 minutes.

3. Using your hands, gently swish rice grains to release excess starch. Carefully pour off water, leaving rice in bowl. Add cold tap water to rice and pour off water. Repeat adding and pouring off cold tap water 4 to 5 times, until water runs almost clear. Drain rice in fine-mesh strainer.

4. Heat reserved onion oil, garlic, coriander, cumin, cinnamon, allspice, ¼ teaspoon pepper, and cayenne in Dutch oven over medium heat until fragrant, about 2 minutes. Add rice and cook, stirring occasionally, until edges of rice begin to turn translucent, about 3 minutes. Add 2 ¼ cups water, sugar, and 1 teaspoon salt and bring to boil. Stir in lentils, reduce heat to low, cover, and cook until all liquid is absorbed, about 12 minutes.

5. Off heat, remove lid, fold dish towel in half, and place over pot; replace lid. Let stand for 10 minutes. Fluff rice and lentils with fork and stir in cilantro and half of crispy onions.

Transfer to serving platter, top with remaining crispy onions, and serve, passing yogurt sauce separately.

French Lentils? Non Merci

Many lentil dishes benefit from the firm, distinct texture of the French variety known as *lentilles du Puy*. But in this dish, the softer (but still intact) texture of green or brown lentils is best because it pairs well with the tender grains of rice. A bonus: Green and brown lentils are also easier to find and cheaper than the French kind.

FIRM AND DISTINCT: Save small, firm French lentils for soups and salads.

SOFT AND CREAMY: Tender brown and green lentils work best for pilaf.