

# Qabili Pilau

This is an **Afghanistani**<sup>1</sup> dish.

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

Quantities are for 4 generous portions plus "seconds".

More complex versions of Qabili Pilau exist, this version is intended to be fairly straightforward. A sort of westernised version of the national dish of Afghanistan.

Note, not only does this taste good, it is also very colourful with the rice taking some colour from the turmeric, and the orange and brown garnish is quite pretty.

## Ingredients

- 200 g **FAIRTRADE** basmati brown rice
- sunflower oil
- 2 medium white onions
- 700 g lamb pieces
- 400 ml water
- 3 medium carrots
- 5 ml ground cumin
- 5 ml **FAIRTRADE** ground cinnamon
- 5 ml **FAIRTRADE** ground turmeric
- salt and **FAIRTRADE** ground black pepper
- 1.5 litres water
- 1 **FAIRTRADE** lemon
- 150 g **FAIRTRADE** sultanas
- 5 ml **FAIRTRADE** raw cane sugar

## 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 4 hours or even overnight.

Skin and chop the onions.

Remove unwanted fat from the lamb and cut into bite sized portions.

Peel the carrots and cut one into chunks, and the other two into matchstick sized pieces.

Measure the cinnamon, cumin and turmeric and mix together.

Juice the lemon and discard the skin, pith and seeds.

### Cooking

Pre-heat the oven to Gas Mark 3.

### Cook the meat

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

Add the onions and stir fry until browning.

Add the lamb pieces 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 the carrot chunks to the pot and then add 400 ml water.

Bring to the boil, turn down to simmer, and simmer for 5 minutes.

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

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

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

Cover the dish and bake in the oven for 90 minutes at Gas Mark 3.

## Cook the rice

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

When the water is up to the boil, drain the rice and put it in the boiling water.

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

Using a slotted spoon remove the lamb and carrot chunks from the juices into a warmed serving dish, cover and keep warm in the lower part of the oven.

Add the lemon juice and the rest of the spice mixture to the cooking juices, and then add a little further water (if necessary) to make the volume up to 400 ml.

Put the pot on the fire to bring the juices to near boiling.

Drain the par-boiled rice and add the rice to the pot and stir.

Return the pot to the oven and cook for a further 25 minutes at Gas Mark 3.

## Cook the garnish

Heat 30 ml sunflower oil and stir fry the carrots with the sugar until light brown (10 minutes). Remove the carrots from the oil.

Just before serving fry the sultanas in the oil (2 minutes) until they begin to swell.

## Assemble the dish

Once the rice is cooked, gently make a layer of rice over the lamb on your serving platter.

Then decorate with the carrots and sultanas.

## To serve

Serve hot with lime pickles as a relish.

## Variations

Add a chopped stalk of celery to the carrots and meat.

Afghanis would double the rice quantity (and increase the liquid proportionately), and would serve the dish in layers rice - meat - rice - garnish on top.

Soaked rice absorbs less water than dry rice, so 400 ml liquid to 200 gm rice is plenty.