

Kosheri - adapted from *Ottolenghi the cookbook* by **My Custard Pie**

Serves 4 very generously

Ingredients

300g green lentils
200g basmati rice
40g unsalted butter
50g vermicelli noodles, broken into 4cm pieces
400ml chicken stock or water*
½ teaspoon grated nutmeg
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1 ½ teaspoons salt (less if using a stock cube)
½ teaspoon black pepper
4 tablespoons olive oil
2 white onions, halved and thinly sliced

* I used a Marigold Swiss Vegetable Bouillon stock cube to make the dish vegetarian (available in Dubai from Organic Foods and Cafe).

For the sauce

4 tablespoons olive oil
2 garlic cloves, crushed
2 hot red chillies, seeded and finely diced
8 ripe tomatoes, chopped (I use tinned unless you can get really ripe ones)
370ml water (refill the tin of tomatoes)
4 tablespoons cider vinegar**
3 scant teaspoons salt
2 teaspoons ground cumin
20g coriander leaves, chopped

** Note for Dubai-ans: As cider vinegar is not in the shops, I use apple vinegar that I get from Organic Foods and Cafe.

1. First cook the lentils. Place the lentils in a large sieve and wash them under a cold running tap. Transfer to a large saucepan, cover with plenty of cold water and bring to the boil. Reduce the heat and simmer for 20 – 25 minutes (test at 15 minutes). The lentils should be tender, but far from mushy. Drain in a colander and leave to one side.

2. While the lentils are cooking, Heat the olive oil in a large frying pan, add the onions and sauté over a medium heat for about 20 min, until dark brown. Transfer to kitchen paper to drain.

3. To make the sauce, heat the olive oil in a pan (the one you fried the onions in), add the garlic and chillies and fry for 2 minutes. Add the chopped tomatoes, water, vinegar, salt and cumin. Bring to the boil, then reduce the heat and simmer for 20 minutes, until slightly thickened. Remove the sauce from the heat, stir in the coriander and then taste. See if you want to add any salt, pepper or extra coriander. Keep hot, or leave to cool; both ways will work with the hot kosheri. Just remember to adjust the seasoning again when cold.

3. In a large bowl, cover the rice with cold water, wash and then drain well. Melt the butter in a large saucepan over a medium heat. Add the raw vermicelli, stir and continue frying and stirring until the vermicelli turns golden brown. Add the drained rice and mix

well until it is coated in the butter. Now add the stock or water, nutmeg, cinnamon, salt and pepper. Bring to the boil, cover and then reduce the heat to a minimum and simmer for 12 minutes. Turn off the heat, remove the lid, cover the pan with a clean tea towel and put the lid back on. Leave like that for about 5 minutes; this helps to make the rice light and fluffy.

4. To serve, lightly break up the rice with a fork, and then add the lentils, and most of the onions, reserving a few for garnish. Taste for seasoning and adjust accordingly. Pile the rice high on a serving platter and top with the remaining onions. Serve hot, with the tomato sauce. This also goes well with a cucumber, tomato and yoghurt salad.

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