

Ground Lamb Pulao

By Nik Sharma

YIELD 4 servings

TIME 45 minutes

The aroma of fresh mint and spices permeates this bright, turmeric-painted pulao made with basmati rice and ground lamb. This recipe, which has origins in the ground meat pulaos of India, is quite flexible and open to additions: a handful of fresh dill, a generous sprinkling of fried peanuts or other nuts, or crispy, fried onions tossed in just before serving. It also works well if you substitute beef for the lamb, and really needs no sides, except maybe some raita, creamy plain yogurt or a salad.

INGREDIENTS

2 cups basmati rice
1 ½ pounds ground lamb or beef
1 teaspoon ghee, unsalted butter or extra-virgin olive oil
4 garlic cloves, peeled and grated
2 tablespoons grated fresh ginger
1 ½ teaspoons garam masala
½ teaspoon red chile powder
½ teaspoon black pepper
2 teaspoons kosher salt
3 tablespoons lime juice
½ teaspoon ground turmeric
1 bunch scallions (about 6), trimmed and thinly sliced

PREPARATION

Step 1

Check the rice and discard any debris. Place the rice in a fine-mesh sieve and rinse under running water until the water runs clear. Place the rice in a bowl, cover with water by 1 inch, and soak for 30 minutes.

Step 2

As the rice soaks, cook the lamb: Place a medium saucepan with a heavy lid or a Dutch oven over medium heat. When the saucepan is hot, break the lamb into chunks, and cook until the fat renders, about 2 minutes. Drain most of the fat, leaving behind 1 to 2 tablespoons, and continue to cook the lamb until it browns, another 2 minutes.

Step 3

Add the ghee and heat over medium until it melts, 30 to 45 seconds. Add the garlic and ginger and sauté for 1 minute.

Step 4

¼ cup loosely packed fresh mint leaves

Add the garam masala, chile powder, black pepper and 1 teaspoon salt and sauté until the spices are fragrant, 1 minute. Add 1 tablespoon lime juice and stir until the flavors come together, about 1 minute.

Step 5

Transfer the lamb mixture to a large bowl and keep warm. (To do so, you could transfer it to a 250-degree oven.) Clean the saucepan and wipe dry.

Step 6

Drain the soaked rice. Add to the same saucepan and cover with water by 1 inch. Stir in 1 tablespoon lime juice, the turmeric and the remaining 1 teaspoon salt. Bring to a boil over medium heat, then cover, and reduce heat to simmer until the rice absorbs all the water, about 10 minutes. (Do not stir the rice as it cooks, or the grains might break.) Remove the saucepan from heat, and let sit, uncovered, for 5 minutes.

Step 7

Stir the rice into the cooked lamb mixture, then drizzle with the remaining 1 tablespoon lime juice. Fold the scallions and mint into the rice, and serve immediately.

PRIVATE NOTES

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