

Turkish Aubergine Pilaff with Cinnamon and Mint

<p>Equipment:</p> <p>Peeler Bowl Knives Chopping boards Measuring cups and spoons Heavy based saucepan Wok or deep sided pan Tea towel Colander Kitchen paper</p>	<p>Ingredients:</p> <p>1 large aubergine (eggplant) 2-3 tbsp olive oil 2-3 tbsp pepitas (pine nuts if you are cooking this at home) 1 large onion, finely chopped 1 tsp coriander seeds 2 tbsp currants soaked in warm water for 5 to 10 mins, then drained 2 tsp sugar 2 tbsp ground cinnamon 2 tbsp dried mint 1 small bunch of fresh dill, finely chopped 3 tomatoes skinned, seeded and finely chopped 2 cups rice, well rinsed and drained Sunflower oil, for deep frying Juice of ½ lemon Salt and ground black pepper Fresh mint sprigs and lemon wedges, to serve</p>
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What to do:

1. Prepare all ingredients as outlined in the ingredient list.
2. Using a vegetable peeler or a small sharp knife, peel the aubergine lengthways in stripes like a zebra. Quarter lengthways, then slice each quarter into bite size chunks and place in a bowl of salted water. Cover with a plate to keep them submerged, and leave to soak for at least 30 minutes, or as long as possible in the kitchen classroom.
3. Meanwhile, heat the olive oil in a heavy pan, stir in the pepitas, and cook until they are golden brown. Add the onion and soften it, then stir in the coriander seeds and currants. Add the sugar, cinnamon, mint and dill then stir in the tomatoes.
4. Toss in the uncooked rice, coating it well in the tomato and spices, then pour in 900 ml of water, season with salt and pepper and bring to the boil. Lower the heat and partially cover the pan, then simmer for 10-12 minutes, until almost all the water has been absorbed. Turn off the heat, cover the pan with a dish towel and press the lid lightly on top. Leave the rice to steam for about 15 minutes.
5. Heat enough sunflower oil for deep-frying in a wok or other deep sided pan. Drain the aubergine and squeeze dry, then toss in batches in the oil for a few minutes at a time. When each piece is golden brown, lift them out with a slotted spoon and drain on kitchen paper.
6. Tip the rice into a serving bowl and toss the aubergine chunks through it with the lemon juice. Garnish with mint sprigs and serve warm or cold, with lemon wedges for squeezing.