

SEASONED BLACK RICE

Pilaf Method

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In France, “pilaf” refers to the method of cooking in which food is sautéed in fat before any liquid is added. This method works extremely well for grains as it allows them to absorb the liquid and aromatics more fully producing a flavorful dish with a fluffy texture. In this recipe, we’re using highly nutritious, nutty and slightly sweet black rice. Feel free to change up or add more vegetables to the recipe - diced asparagus, green beans, mushrooms, carrots or other root vegetables all work well and offer great seasonal options.

photo: seasoned black rice with salmon and vegetables - Love + Craft Kitchen

Makes approximately 4 servings

Prep Time: 10 minutes | Cook Time: 35 - 37 minutes

Rest Time: 5 - 10 minutes

INGREDIENTS

1 1/2 tablespoons olive or avocado oil

1/2 cup diced onion or leeks

1/2 cup diced red, yellow or orange bell pepper

2 cloves garlic, minced

1/2 teaspoon salt

1/4 teaspoon ground black or white pepper

1 cup black rice (not sticky black rice)

2 cups vegetable or chicken stock, broth or water

1/4 teaspoon dried thyme (or 1 teaspoon fresh thyme leaves)

1/4 teaspoon dried tarragon (or 1 teaspoon fresh tarragon leaves)

1 small bay leaf

optional garnish - chopped fresh herbs, slivered or sliced almonds, chopped dried cranberries or cherries

DIRECTIONS

1. Heat oil over medium heat in a 4 qt saucepan. Add the onion and bell pepper and sauté until the veggies are browned on the edges and the onion is translucent, about 3 - 5 minutes. Add the garlic, salt and pepper and sauté an additional 30 seconds until fragrant.
2. Add the rice, stirring to coat well. Toast the rice grains about 1 minute, stirring frequently.
3. Add the liquid (stock, broth or water), thyme, tarragon and bay leaf. Stir gently. Raise heat and bring to a boil and stir. Cover the pot and reduce the heat to low for a gentle simmer. Cook for 30 minutes - keep covered, do not remove the lid and stir during this time.

To check for doneness, take a quick look under the lid and taste a grain or two. The liquid should be absorbed in the pan and the grains should be tender and hold their shape, not mushy.

- If liquid remains but the grains are fully cooked, drain the rice in a fine mesh strainer.

- If the liquid is absorbed but the grains need more cooking time, add a small amount of water or stock and continue to cook another 3 - 5 minutes.
4. Once fully cooked, remove the pan from heat and allow the rice to rest, covered, for 5 - 10 minutes. Remove the bay leaf; fluff rice with fork and transfer to serving bowl.
 5. OPTIONAL - Garnish with a sprinkling of chopped fresh herbs, toasted almonds or chopped dried fruit, if desired.