

# Persian chicken with rice, pistachio and mint

**Karen Martini**

**Time:** 30 mins - 1 hour

**Serves:** 4-6

This one-pot pilaf-style dish reminds me of my grandmother's cooking – it's so fragrant with its spices. I find it particularly comforting. One of the keys here is to brown the chicken in the pot first, which contributes so much flavour to the finished dish. If you're not using a whole chicken that's been broken down, chicken thighs are best; just ensure they have their skin on (you can buy them bone-in as "chicken chops").



## Ingredients

1 litre chicken stock

3 bay leaves

4 cloves

4 saffron threads

70ml extra virgin olive oil

1.4kg chicken, cut into 8 pieces

salt and freshly ground black pepper

70g butter

1 onion, finely diced

2 garlic cloves, finely grated

2-3 celery stalks, very finely diced

2 tsp ground cumin

1½ tsp anise seeds (or fennel seeds), ground

1 tsp ground white pepper

½ tsp ground cardamom

¼ tsp chilli powder

## Method

**1.** Bring the stock and 300ml water to the boil with the bay leaves, cloves and saffron, then set aside to infuse.

**2.** Heat the oil in a large ovenproof pot (with a tight-fitting lid) over medium heat. Season the chicken, then sear skin-side down for 5 minutes. Flip and cook on the flesh side for 3 minutes, then remove from the pan.

**3.** Add the butter, onion, garlic and celery to the pan and cook until softened, about 5 minutes. Stir through the spices and salt, then stir through the rice for 30 seconds, before arranging the chicken pieces in the base of the pan and pouring in the stock. Add the quince paste and lemon slices, and bring to a simmer around the edges of the pot, bubbling fast. Turn heat to low, cover and cook for 20 minutes, then turn off the heat and let stand, without removing the lid, for 10 minutes.

**4.** To serve, squeeze over the remaining lemon half and scatter over the pistachio and mint. Serve with a dollop of yoghurt.

**Tip:** The quince paste was something I had on hand when cooking this recently, and it yields a very interesting result, but you could use some dried fruit, such as apricots or currants, instead.

\*The skins of Meyer and Lemonade lemons (available at specialty vegie shops) soften when cooked; the fruits are delicious, skin and all. A regular lemon will also add flavour, but the skin won't soften in the same way.

2½ tsp salt flakes

500g basmati rice

100g quince paste, cut into 1cm dice (or dried apricots)

1 Meyer or Lemonade lemon\*, cut in half, one half cut into 6 slices

3 tbsp pistachios, chopped

natural yoghurt, to serve

shredded mint leaves, to serve

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meaty  
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Meynink

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and vodka  
pasta bake

1-2  
hrs | Katrina  
Meynink

15-minute  
chickpea  
pasta with  
harissa and  
yoghurt

< 30  
mins | Jessica  
Brook

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silverbeet,  
stracciatella  
cheese and  
peas

30 mins - 1  
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Martini

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Maehashi

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sauce

30 mins - 1  
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Martini

Midweek dinner

Chicken and  
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brown butter  
and crispy sage

30 mins - 1  
hr | Karen Martini

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date,  
walnut  
and  
maple  
breakfast  
loaf

1-2  
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Sunday roast

Pollo  
agrodolce (aka  
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sour meets  
peri-peri  
roast chicken)

1-2 hrs | Karen  
Martini

Vegetarian

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barberry  
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30 mins - 1  
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