



Best Of Bengali Apr 9

# Kacchi Mutton Biryani (Dhaka style mutton and rice layers)

**Serves: 15 people**

**Time taken: overnight prep and 3 hours on the day**

I would love to claim that this is a dish that has been passed down through the generations. However, my rather stubborn aunt has decided that she will take the secret to her successful recipe. As a result, I have Frankenstein-ed my own rendition from her diatribe of “just a touch of this” and “you’ll know when it’s done” with a healthy dose of recipes I’ve found online. Whether you can call mine a tradition as old as time or a haphazardly hacked together list, there is no denying that this biryani is a testament to how much you love those who languish at your dining table!

There are several biryani techniques that vary through South Asian regions. ‘Kacchi’ refers specifically to the method where marinated pieces of meat are layered through par-boiled rice. If you’re short on time, then you can precook the meat but of course, it becomes a whole other iteration, known as ‘pakki’.

## Ingredients for meat

- 1.5 kg mutton, cut into bitesize chunks

- 2 tsp salt, to taste
- 250ml natural yoghurt
- 2 tbsp garlic and ginger paste
- 250ml tomatoes, pureed
- 1 tsp turmeric
- 2 tsp red chili powder
- 1 tbsp garam masala
- Half the bereshta (mentioned below)

### **Ingredients for bereshta (crispy fried onions)**

- 3-4 finely sliced onions
- 500ml vegetable oil for frying
- Optional: mustard oil instead of vegetable oil; pinch of salt

### **Ingredients for rice**

- 500g extra long basmati rice
- Salt, to taste
- 1 tbsp oil (preferably from fried onions)
- 1 tsp cumin seeds (shah jeera is preferred)
- 4 cardamom pods, crushed
- 2 4cm cinnamon stick
- 1 star anise
- 1 aloo bukhara (dried plum) per person, soaked in warm water
- 2-3 bay leaves, snapped in half
- 2 litres waters (enough to cover plus an extra 2cm above the rice level)

### **Ingredients for topping the layers**

- Small handful cashews, lightly toasted

- Generous handful of chopped mint leaves. I tend to mix this with dried marigold for decoration
- Remaining amount of bereshta
- ½ potato or egg per person, boiled and lightly fried in salt, turmeric and chili powder
- Few saffron strands soaked in warm water, ground in pestle and mortar

### **To prepare meat**

1. Brine mutton by soaking in water and generous amount of salt for an hour, ideally refrigerated overnight. Rinse and drain.
2. Mix all powdered spices together.

### **To make bereshta (crispy fried onions)**

1. Thinly slice onions.
2. Add 2-3 tsp mustard oil to a generous few glugs of vegetable oil and heat pan on a medium high heat.
3. Once the pan is hot, lower the flame and brown the onions with salt for 10 minutes, constantly stirring. Drain on paper towel and use half in the mutton marinade, leaving the remainder for topping the biryani.

### **To make fried eggs or potatoes**

1. For potatoes, peel and cut them in half and par boil. Otherwise, hard boil eggs and peel.
2. Sprinkle your chosen topping with salt, turmeric and red chili (less than half a tsp, this is more for colour purpose)
3. Fry in the same oil and pan as the onions.

### **To make the rice**

1. Wash and rinse rice until water runs clear. It is best to soak rice while the meat is brining.

2. Drain the rice and add to boiling water seasoned with salt, along with the whole spices and aloo bukhara.
3. Stir, cover halfway and turn heat to low when water froths again. Rice should be at level with water when it is ready to take off heat.
4. Test a few grains by breaking between your fingers. They should not be firm or turn to mush but hold their shape when broken. Drain and set aside.

### **For assembling biryani layers**

1. Preheat oven to 160C (320F/ Gas Mark 3) and prepare an ovenproof stock pot or dutch oven.
2. Meanwhile, soak and grind saffron in warm water; add a few teaspoons of oil to a cup of water for the rice.
3. Add half the marinated meat then layer rice, onions, potatoes and aloo bukhara repeatedly.
4. Poke holes to the bottom layer for steam to escape.
5. Add half the oil and water mix and sprinkle some saffron dye.
6. Place in the preheated oven for 1.5 hours.
7. Add the final layer of potatoes, bereshta and mint when you remove from the oven. Serve immediately.

### **If you're short on time:**

- Buy shop bought bereshta- but under no circumstances can you skip this altogether!
- Cook your meat ahead of time to half the time in the oven.

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**Tami** 2 years ago · 0 Likes

Which whole spices needs grinding? And what was done with the rice spice ingredients?



**Thahmina Haseen** 2 years ago · 0 Likes

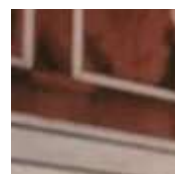
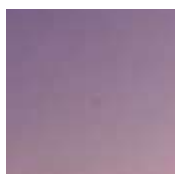
Hi, thanks for pointing that out- I've addressed it in the instructions now.

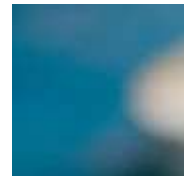
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