

FOOD52

Sweet Rice with Carrots and Nuts

By Louisa Shafia

Editors' Comments:

The name of this orange and cardamom-infused Persian rice dish is "shirin polo," which means "sweet rice" in Farsi. It's traditionally paired with chicken, so it's a great side dish with chicken kebabs or roasted chicken. Be sure to zest only the outer layer of the orange, because the white pith underneath will make the dish bitter. The mild flavor of unrefined coconut oil complements the sweetness of this rice and can make for an interesting variation on the traditional butter. (This recipe is from *The New Persian Kitchen* by Louisa Shafia).

Serves 6 to 8

- 2 cups white basmati rice, soaked in cold water for 1 hour
 - 3 cups water
 - Sea salt
 - 2 tablespoons butter or unrefined coconut oil, at room temperature
 - 3 tablespoons unrefined coconut oil
 - 1 yellow onion, finely diced
 - 2 cups grated carrots (about 3 large carrots)
 - 1/2 cup slivered or coarsely chopped almonds, toasted
 - 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
 - 1 teaspoon ground cardamom
 - 1/4 teaspoon ground turmeric
 - 1/2 cup pistachios, coarsely chopped, plus 1 tablespoon for garnish
 - Grated zest of 1 large orange
 - 1/4 cup honey
 - 1/2 teaspoon saffron, ground and steeped in 1 tablespoon hot water
1. Drain the rice and rinse under cold water until the water runs clear. In a stockpot, combine the water and a pinch of salt and bring to a boil. Add the rice, return to a boil, then turn down the heat to its lowest setting. Cover and cook for 20 minutes. Turn off the heat and let the rice rest for 5 minutes, then dot with the butter and fluff with a fork. The rice should be dry and fluffy.
 2. While the rice cooks, heat a small skillet over medium heat and sauté the onion in the coconut oil for about 15 minutes, until lightly browned. Add the carrots, almonds, cinnamon, cardamom, and turmeric, and cook, stirring often, for about 10 minutes, until the carrots are tender. Add 1/2 cup pistachios, the orange zest, and the honey and cook for about 2 minutes, until heated through. Season with salt.
 3. Scoop the rice into a large bowl. Add the carrot mixture and drizzle in the saffron. Mix gently and season with salt. Garnish with the remaining 1 tablespoon pistachios.