

Anchovy Pilaf

Traditional Turkish Black Sea anchovy pilaf with rice, herbs, and spices. An authentic regional dish combining fresh anchovies with aromatic pilaf rice.

1h

PREP

40 min

COOK

1h 40min

TOTAL

4

SERVINGS

Hard

DIFFICULTY

Ingredients

- 2 cup anchovy
- 2 cup rice
- 2 cup water
- 3 tsp black currant
- 3 tsp pine nut
- 3 tsp dry grape
- 0.5 tbsp dry mint
- 1 tsp black pepper
- 2 tbsp butter
- 1 tbsp salt

Instructions

- 1 Prepare the rice**

Rinse 2 cups rice in cold water until the water runs clear, about 2-3 rinses. Drain thoroughly in a fine-mesh strainer and set aside.
- 2** Preheat your oven to 200°C (400°F). Lightly grease a 9x13 inch baking dish with olive oil or butter.
- 3 Prepare the aromatics**

Heat 2 tablespoons olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add the drained rice and stir constantly for 3-4 minutes until the grains are lightly toasted and smell nutty.
- 4** Add 3 teaspoons pine nuts to the rice and stir for 1 minute until fragrant. Add 3 teaspoons currants and 1 teaspoon salt, stirring to combine.

5 **Add liquid and seasonings**

Pour 2 cups hot water into the rice mixture and bring to a boil. Add 3 teaspoons fresh herbs and ½ tablespoon tomato paste, stirring until the paste dissolves completely.

6 **Transfer to baking dish**

Pour the rice mixture into the prepared baking dish and spread evenly. The liquid should just cover the rice by about ¼ inch.

7 Arrange the cleaned anchovies in a single layer over the rice, spacing them evenly. Dot the surface with 1 tablespoon butter, breaking it into small pieces.

8 **Bake the pilaf**

Cover the dish tightly with aluminum foil and bake for 25-30 minutes until the rice is tender and has absorbed most of the liquid. Remove foil and bake for an additional 5-10 minutes until the top is lightly golden.

9 Remove from oven and let stand covered for 10 minutes to allow the rice to finish steaming and the flavors to meld before serving.

Tips

Always clean anchovies thoroughly under cold running water and pat them completely dry before use – excess moisture will make the dish soggy and affect the final texture.

Toast the rice lightly in a dry pan before adding liquids to enhance its nutty flavor and help maintain individual grain separation during cooking.

Use a wide, shallow baking dish rather than a deep one to ensure even cooking and proper rice texture throughout the dish.

Check the rice for doneness by tasting a few grains from the center of the dish – they should be tender but still have a slight bite, not mushy.

Let the finished dish rest for 10-15 minutes after removing from the oven before serving, which allows the flavors to meld and the rice to settle.

If your anchovies are particularly large, you can butterfly them by cutting along the belly and removing the backbone for more even cooking.

Adjust the liquid amounts based on your rice type – some varieties absorb more water than others, so keep extra warm broth on hand if needed.

For extra flavor, consider using fish stock or light chicken broth instead of plain water for cooking the rice.