

Lentils Pilaf

Authentic Turkish lentil pilaf recipe with bulgur wheat. A hearty vegetarian dish perfect for weeknight dinners.

Ready in 35 minutes!

15 min

PREP

20 min

COOK

35 min

TOTAL

4

SERVINGS

Easy

DIFFICULTY

Ingredients

- 1 cup green lentil
- 1 cup cracked wheat
- 1 onion
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tsp black pepper
- 1 cup water
- 3 cup red lentil

Instructions

1 Prepare the lentils

Rinse 1 cup of lentils under cold running water until the water runs clear. Place lentils in a medium saucepan with 3 cups of water and bring to a boil over high heat.

2 Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer the lentils for 12-15 minutes until tender but still holding their shape. Drain the lentils and set aside.

3 Toast the bulgur

Heat 2 tablespoons of butter in a heavy-bottomed saucepan over medium heat until melted and foaming. Add 1 cup of bulgur and stir constantly for 2-3 minutes until the bulgur is lightly toasted and fragrant.

4 Add 3 cups of hot water or broth to the toasted bulgur along with 1 teaspoon of salt. Bring to a boil over high heat, then reduce heat to low.

- 5 Cover the saucepan and simmer for 12-15 minutes until the bulgur is tender and has absorbed all the liquid. Remove from heat and let stand covered for 5 minutes.
- 6 **Caramelize the onion**
While the bulgur cooks, dice 1 onion into small pieces. Heat oil in a large skillet over medium-low heat and add the diced onion.
- 7 Cook the onion for 12-15 minutes, stirring occasionally, until golden brown and caramelized. Season with 1 teaspoon of black pepper and salt to taste.
- 8 **Combine the pilaf**
Fluff the bulgur with a fork to separate the grains. Gently fold in the cooked lentils, being careful not to mash them.
- 9 Add the caramelized onions to the bulgur and lentil mixture, stirring gently to distribute evenly throughout.
- 10 Cover and let the pilaf rest off heat for 10 minutes to allow the flavors to meld. Taste and adjust seasoning with additional salt and pepper if needed before serving warm.

Tips

Choose high-quality brown or green lentils that hold their shape well during cooking. Avoid red lentils as they become too mushy for this dish. Always rinse lentils thoroughly before cooking to remove any debris.

Toast the bulgur wheat in butter or oil for 2-3 minutes before adding liquid. This step enhances the nutty flavor and helps each grain maintain its individual texture in the final dish.

Cook lentils and bulgur separately for the best texture. This allows you to control the cooking time for each ingredient, ensuring the lentils are tender while the bulgur remains fluffy and distinct.

Caramelize the onions slowly over medium-low heat until they're golden brown and sweet. This process takes about 10-15 minutes but adds incredible depth of flavor to the pilaf.

Use warm broth instead of water when possible. Vegetable or chicken broth adds richness and depth that plain water cannot provide. Heat the broth before adding it to prevent temperature drops.

Let the cooked pilaf rest covered for 10 minutes after cooking. This resting period allows the grains to fully absorb any remaining liquid and makes fluffing easier.

Fluff the pilaf gently with a fork rather than stirring with a spoon. This technique separates the grains without mashing them, maintaining the dish's light, fluffy texture.

Taste and adjust seasoning at the end of cooking. Add salt, pepper, or a squeeze of lemon juice to brighten the flavors just before serving.