

Lamb Pilaf

This recipe is adapted from the is adapted from [*The Essential Mediterranean Cookbook*](#) from Thunder Bay Press (a great book to own). It's great on its own for a simple dinner, or can be put on a platter for a side dish for people to help themselves. It's difficult for me to advise you on how many people this will serve, since I have been known to eat the entire thing on a particularly hungry evening. I would guess that you would be safe in assuming that this will serve two to four reasonable people.

- 3 cups eggplant, cut into ½" cubes (about ½ an eggplant)
 - Olive oil for frying
 - Salt

 - 1 pound ground lamb
 - 1-1/2 tsp. ground cumin
 - ½ tsp. ground cinnamon
 - ½ tsp. ground coriander
 - 1 tsp. ground allspice
 - Olive oil for frying

 - 1 cup onion, finely chopped
 - Olive oil for frying
 - 1 clove garlic, minced
 - ¾ tsp. curry powder
 - ¾ tsp. cayenne powder
 - 1 Tbs. tomato paste
 - ¼ cup chicken stock

 - 1 cup white rice
 - ½ cup orzo
 - 1 cup chicken stock
 - 1 cup water
 - ¼ cup raisins or currents
 - 4 Tbs pine nuts
 - Salt and black pepper

 - 3 tomatoes
 - 2 Tbs. minced cilantro
1. Place the eggplant in a colander, sprinkle evenly with salt, and leave for 1 hour.
 2. In the meantime, mix the lamb, cumin, cinnamon, coriander, and allspice in a bowl until all ingredients are well combined.
 3. Heat some olive oil in a frying pan. Roll ¾ of the meat mixture into small balls (about the size of largish marbles) and cook uncovered in small batches (to avoid

steaming them) in the pan until they are lightly browned and cooked through. Drain them on paper towels. Fry the remaining $\frac{1}{4}$ of the loose meat mixture in the pan until it is also lightly browned. Set both aside.

4. Heat some more oil in the frying pan and add the onion and cook until soft but not brown. Add the garlic, curry and cayenne to the mix and cook for another minute. If you are worried about making the dish too spicy, leave the cayenne out and add it later in step 7 when you taste the final mixture. Then mix in the tomato paste and finally the chicken stock. You should have a fairly thick onion sauce at this point.
5. Rinse the eggplant well and squeeze dry in a towel. In another frying pan, heat a little oil, add the eggplant and fry, flipping occasionally, until golden brown. Remove the eggplant onto paper towels and compress gently to soak up excess oil.
6. Put the chicken stock and water in a pot with a lid and bring to a boil. Add the rice and orzo and cook covered, on low heat, until the liquid is all absorbed.
7. Add the raisins, nuts, ground meat, and onion sauce to the rice, stir well and taste test. Add salt or pepper if you desire. Stir in the meatballs and eggplant.
8. Cut the tomatoes in quarters (lengthwise) and fry in olive oil (skin side up) for a few minutes on each cut side.
9. Spoon the pilaf onto a plate and garnish with cilantro and fried tomatoes.