Main dishes / Iran

Persian Rice with Tahdig

Long-grain basmati steamed with saffron over a scorching base until a golden, burnished crust forms on the bottom — the tahdig that every Iranian competes to claim.

Time 90 min **Servings** 4

What you'll need.

- ☐ 100 parts Basmati rice (aged, long-grain)
- ☐ 10 parts Neutral oil or clarified butter (for pot)
- ☐ 2 parts Fine salt
- ☐ 5 parts Saffron-stained rice and dried barberries (zereshk)
- ☐ 0.1 parts Saffron threads (bloomed in hot water)
- ☐ 15 parts Full-fat plain yogurt (for tahdig base)
- ☐ 400 parts Water (for parboiling)

Let's make it.

01 Rinse the basmati in cold water, changing the water 4–5 times until it runs clear. Cover the rinsed rice with cold water, add 1 tsp of salt per cup of rice, and soak for at least 30 minutes — ideally 1–2 hours. The soaking whitens the grains, separates them during cooking, and cuts the final steam time.

02 Bring a large pot of generously salted water (as salty as pasta water) to a rolling boil. Drain the soaked rice and add to the boiling water. Parboil for exactly 5–7 minutes, stirring once. Test frequently from minute 5: the rice should be cooked on the outside but still have a distinct chalky white line at the very center when bitten. Drain immediately through a fine colander and rinse with cold water to stop cooking.

03 Heat the oil in a wide, heavy-bottomed pot (nonstick or well-seasoned) over medium-high heat until shimmering. Whisk the yogurt with a ladleful (about 15 parts) of the drained parboiled rice and the bloomed saffron water. Spread this yogurt-rice mixture across the bottom of the hot pot in an even layer — this forms the tahdig. Mound the remaining parboiled rice over the top in a pyramid, keeping it away from the pot sides. Drizzle the remaining saffron water over the top. Wrap the lid tightly in a clean kitchen towel (to absorb steam) and place on the pot. Cook over medium-high heat for 10 minutes to set the crust, then reduce to the lowest possible heat.

04 After 45–55 total minutes of steaming, remove the lid. Scoop out the fluffy upper rice onto a serving platter and scatter the saffron-stained grains and barberries over the top for color. Now the moment of truth: place a large flat platter over the mouth of the pot and invert in one decisive motion. The tahdig should release as a single, golden disc — crackling and glossy. If it sticks, return to low heat for 2 more minutes.

Recipe & provenance ForkRecipe Kitchen / ForkRecipe / FoodML and contributors / CC BY-SA 4.0.
Original recipe and attribution CC BY-SA 4.0
Servings are an estimate; check quantities in the source recipe.
recipes.dvs-services.be / persian-rice-tahdig