



Rice Pilaf with Vermicelli

Serves 10-12



Liz Clayman

This fluffy rice threaded with thin strands of pasta is an everyday preparation that graces many Middle Eastern tables. To prevent the cooked rice from sticking together, the raw grains are first rinsed several times to remove excess starch. Toasting the rice grains then sets the exterior, which helps keep them separate and prevents them from clumping once cooked. The broken pieces of vermicelli are also toasted until “red” to bring out their nutty taste.

Vermicelli can be found in Middle Eastern and Latin grocery stores, where it may be referred to as “fideos.” Typically, the wheat-based noodles are dried in little nest shapes or already broken up. Do not use Italian vermicelli pasta (it will be too thick) or Asian rice vermicelli (a very different product).

From “The Bread and Salt Between Us” by Mayada Anjari with Jennifer Sit, Lake Isle Press, 2018

INGREDIENTS

5 cups (about 2 pounds) medium-grain white rice
1/4 cup olive oil
1/4 cup vegetable oil
2 cups crumbled wheat vermicelli or fideos (1-inch pieces)
7 1/2 cups hot water
2 teaspoons salt
Black pepper, for serving

PREPARATION

Place the rice in a large bowl. Rinse with warm water, then drain. Repeat two more times, or until the water runs clear. Drain the rice thoroughly in a fine-mesh strainer.

Heat the olive and vegetable oils in a large, heavy pot over medium-high until hot. Add the vermicelli and stir to coat with the oil. Cook for 3 to 4 minutes, stirring occasionally, until browned and toasted.

Add the rice and stir until thoroughly combined. Cook for 2 to 4 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the rice is lightly toasted. Add the hot water and salt and stir to combine. Bring to a boil on high. Cover and reduce the heat to low. Cook for 40 to 45 minutes, until the rice is fluffy and tender and the water