RECIPE

Brown rice jollof with peas and spinach

A West African tomato-pepper rice for dinner: brown rice cooked in a thick blended base of tomato, red pepper and scotch bonnet, with peas and spinach folded in at the end.

MAKES

6 servings US Metric

TOTAL

1 h 30 min

Ingredients

- [ ] 1 ½ cups long-grain brown rice, rinsed
- [ ] 5 plum tomatoes, quartered
- [ ] 2 medium red bell peppers, seeded and chopped
- [ ] 1 large onion, half chopped for the blender, half diced
- [ ] 1 scotch bonnet pepper, seeded
- [ ] 2 tbsp olive oil
- [ ] 2 tbsp no-salt-added tomato paste
- [ ] 1 tsp dried thyme
- [ ] 1 tsp curry powder
- [ ] ½ tsp ground ginger
- [ ] ¼ tsp ground black pepper
- [ ] 1 bay leaf
- [ ] 2 ½ cups low-sodium chicken broth
- [ ] ¾ cup water, ½ cup at the start and ¼ cup held back in case the rice is still

Method

1. Put the tomatoes, red peppers, the half onion for the blender, and the scotch bonnet in a blender. Blend until smooth. Keep the lid on and your face back when you pour it: scotch bonnet is hot.

2. Heat the oil in a large, heavy pot over medium heat. Cook the diced onion for 5 minutes, until soft and just turning gold.

3. Stir in the tomato paste, thyme, curry powder, ginger, black pepper and bay leaf. Cook for 2 minutes, stirring, until the paste darkens a shade.

4. Pour in the blended base. Cook uncovered at a steady bubble for 15 to 20 minutes, stirring now and then, until it is thick and a spoon dragged through the pot leaves a clear line.

- [ ] firm
- [ ] 1 tsp salt
- [ ] 1 cup frozen green peas
- [ ] 2 cups loosely packed baby spinach

5. Add the rinsed rice, the broth, ½ cup of the water and the salt. Stir once, scraping the bottom, and bring to a boil.

6. Turn the heat to its lowest setting, cover tightly and cook 40 minutes. Brown rice is cooked in a bigger pot of liquid than white, and at 5,430 ft the house adds time to rice (our kitchen practice: CSU's longer-simmer rule is for meat). Do not lift the lid before 35 minutes.

7. Check a grain: it should be chewy but not hard. If it is still firm, stir in the held-back ¼ cup water, cover and cook 5 more minutes.

8. Scatter the frozen peas and spinach over the top, cover and take the pot off the heat. Let it sit 10 minutes. Lift out the bay leaf, then fold the peas and spinach through with a fork.

9 Cool leftovers in shallow containers within 2 hours (1 hour if it is above 90 °F), then refrigerate. Reheat to 165 °F (USDA FSIS). Keeps 3 to 4 days and freezes 1 to 2 months (USDA FSIS FoodKeeper, “Leftovers without meat, fish, poultry, or egg”: Refrigerate 3 to 4 Days, Freeze 1 to 2 Months; the pot has chicken broth, so the “Leftovers with meat, fish, poultry, or egg” row also applies: Refrigerate 3 to 4 Days, Freeze 2 to 3 Months; the shorter freezer figure, the “Leftovers without meat, fish, poultry, or egg” row's, is used).

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