

Cardamom rice with poached eggs and yoghurt

This is what you should cook on a late Sunday morning to really spoil your family. I can't get enough of it. Additions will be welcomed: consider peas, French beans, fried onions, buttered sunflower seeds and even sultanas.

Serves 4

4 tbsp groundnut oil, plus extra to finish
2 medium onions, finely chopped
4 garlic cloves, crushed
6 fresh curry leaves
8 cardamom pods
2 tsp coriander seeds
2 tsp ground turmeric
2 fresh green chillies, thinly sliced
400g basmati rice
720ml water
1 tbsp white wine vinegar
8 medium free-range eggs
70g parsley leaves, chopped
70g coriander leaves, chopped
6 tbsp lime juice
8 tbsp Greek yoghurt
coarse sea salt and black pepper

Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Start with the rice. Heat up the groundnut oil in a large, heavy, ovenproof saucepan for which you have a tight-fitting lid. Add the onions and garlic and sauté on a low heat for 8 minutes. Add the curry leaves, cardamom, coriander seeds, turmeric, chillies and 1 teaspoon salt. Continue to cook and stir for 4 minutes on a medium heat.

Add the rice and stir to coat in the oil. Add the water (it should come 1cm above the rice). Cover the pan and put it into the oven. Cook for about 25 minutes. By this point the rice should be totally cooked. When you check, remove the lid very briefly so you don't lose all the steam in the pan. Remove the pan from the oven, keeping it covered, and set it aside somewhere warm.

Now poach the eggs. Fill a shallow saucepan with enough water for a whole egg to cook in. Add the vinegar and bring to a rapid boil. To poach each egg, carefully break it into a cup, then gently pour into the boiling water. Immediately remove the pan from the heat and set it aside. After about 4 minutes the egg should be poached to perfection. Using a slotted spoon carefully transfer the poached egg to a bowl of warm water to keep it from cooling down. Once all the eggs are done, dry them on kitchen paper.

When you are nearly finished poaching the eggs, stir the parsley, coriander and lime juice into the rice and fluff it up with a fork. Taste and adjust the seasoning.

Divide the rice among individual serving bowls and spoon yoghurt on top. Place two eggs on each portion, drizzle some oil on top and sprinkle with salt and pepper.