

Chicken Plov

Azerbaijan • fragrant rice with chicken, raisins & warm spices



Photo: Lambros

Ingredients

- 400–500 g boneless chicken thighs (or breast), cut into bite-size pieces
- 1 medium onion, finely chopped
- 2–3 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 tbsp butter or ghee (or neutral oil)
- 1½ cups basmati rice (about 300 g), rinsed well
- 2¾–3 cups chicken stock or water
- ¼ tsp saffron threads (optional) or ½ tsp turmeric (for color)
- ½ tsp ground cumin
- ½ tsp ground coriander
- ¼ tsp cinnamon (optional but nice)
- Salt and black pepper
- ½ cup raisins (or dried barberries, if you can find them)
- 2 tbsp slivered almonds or pine nuts (optional)
- 1 bay leaf
- Fresh herbs to serve: dill or parsley (optional)

Steps

- 1 Rinse the rice until the water runs mostly clear. Soak in cold water with a pinch of salt for 15 minutes while you prep everything else.

- 2 Heat butter/ghee in a wide pot or deep pan. Sauté onion until soft and lightly golden, 6–8 minutes. Add garlic and cook 30 seconds.
- 3 Add chicken, season with salt and pepper, and brown lightly for 4–5 minutes. Stir in cumin, coriander, and cinnamon (if using).
- 4 Drain the rice and add it to the pot. Stir gently to coat with the seasoned fat. Add bay leaf. Pour in stock/water.
- 5 Bring to a boil, then reduce to low, cover, and cook 15 minutes (do not stir). If using saffron: bloom it in 2 tbsp hot water and drizzle over the rice in the last 5 minutes; if using turmeric, add it with the stock.
- 6 Meanwhile, quickly fry raisins (and nuts if using) in a small pan with a bit of butter/oil for 1–2 minutes until they puff. Sprinkle over the plov. Rest 5 minutes off heat, then fluff gently with a fork and serve with herbs.

Notes

- Weeknight shortcut: use pre-cooked rice; sauté onion/garlic/chicken with spices, then fold rice in and warm through before topping with raisins.
- If you want it more “pilaf-like” (looser grains), use the lower amount of liquid and a wide pan.
- Serve with a simple cucumber–tomato salad and/or plain yogurt.