



# Basmati Rice Pilaf with Apricots

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Serves 6

- ¼ cup chopped dried apricots
- 2 wide strips lemon zest
- 2 cups cold water
- 3 tbl. unsalted butter
- 1 tsp. garam masala (an Indian spice blend)
- 1 medium onion, diced
- 1 ¼ tsp. kosher salt
- 1 cup basmati rice, lightly rinsed and drained
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 1 bay leaf
- 1/3 cup fresh mint leaves
- ¼ cup toasted unsalted pistachios or cashews

Put the apricots and lemon zest in the 2 cups of cold water. Melt the butter in a medium saucepan over medium heat, add the garam masala, and toast, stirring until fragrant, about 1 minute. Add the onion and ¼ tsp. of the salt and cook, stirring occasionally, until the onion is tender and translucent, about 6 minutes.

Stir in the rice and cook, stirring occasionally, until it begins to brown, about 4 minutes. Stir in the water along with the apricots, lemon zest, the remaining 1 tsp. salt, and the pepper to taste. Bring to a simmer. Reduce the heat to low, wrap a clean dish towel around the saucepan lid, and cover the saucepan. Cook for 10 minutes, set aside for 5 minutes undisturbed, and then remove lid and fluff with a fork. Mound the pilaf on a serving platter or in a shallow bowl, tear the mint over, and top with the nuts.

Cook's Note: Wrapping the lid with a dish towel keeps the steam in the pot, encourages the rice grains to stay separate, and absorbs condensation that would otherwise collect on the lid and drip back into the pan.

Credit – foodnetwork.com