

DEEPLY CARAMELIZED MDARDARA

I haven't received such a strong reaction to a recipe tease in while. I think Mdardara pulls at everyone's satisfying childhood dishes. This recipe brings up the volume by caramelizing the onions a couple of seconds too long, so their full bodied, rich flavors are transferred to the rice. This is done by cooking the rice not only with salt and peppers but with the caramelized onions themselves. We add the cooked lentils to the mix one the rice is done and top them off with even more crispy onions. Because you have such complex flavors from the Mdardara I like plating it with fresh greens, crunchy cabbage salad and a cool dairy like labneh for the perfect plate.

DESCRIPTION

An easy satisfying lunch or dinner option that will fill you up. Mdardara has a prep time of 10 minutes and a cook time of 40 minutes.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup brown lentils
- ½ cup Egyptian white rice
- 2 large white onions, cut into wings (long slices)
- 4 tablespoons cooking oil
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 1 teaspoon seven spices
- 4 cracks of black pepper

METHOD

Step 1: Preparing the Rice and Lentils

Soak the rice in room temperature water for 15 minutes.

Place a small deep pot on the stovetop at medium high heat. Place the lentils in the pot and add 4 cups of water, 1 teaspoon of salt, a tablespoon of the sliced onions and boil for 40 minutes. Keep your eyes on the lentils, they soak up a lot of water. The first time I tried this recipe I burned the lentils because there wasn't enough water. If you find things getting dry, add more water.

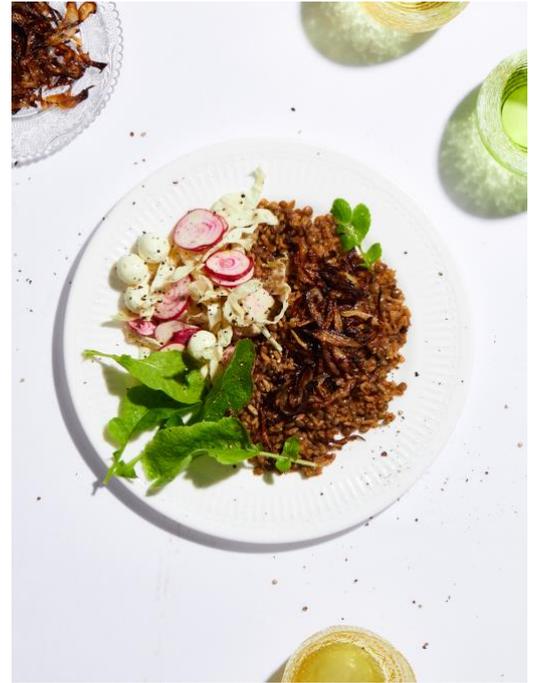
Step 2: Frying the Onions

While the lentils are cooking you can proceed with the subsequent steps.

Place a large skillet on the stovetop, set the heat at medium high and add the olive oil. Once the oil is hot, add the remaining onions. Cook the onions until they are quite caramelized while stirring frequently, this may take up to 10 minutes. Once the onions are cooked, reserve half on the side and add the other half to a small deep pot to cook the rice in.

Step 3: Cooking the Rice

Place the onion filled, small deep pot on the stove top with the heat at medium. Drain the rice and add them to the onions in the pot. Add the salt, seven spices and black pepper. Stir the onions, rice and spices for 30 seconds and add ¾ cup water. Once the water comes to a boil, cover the lid and set the heat at medium low for 15 minutes. After the 15 minutes make sure the rice is cooked. Leave the lid closed for another 5 minutes with the heat off.



Step 4: Combining the Rice and Lentils

Drain the cooked lentils, add them to the rice and mix until they are fully combined.

Step 5: Plating

Top the Mdardara with the other half of crispy onions and serve with fresh greens, crunchy cabbage salad and a cool dairy like labneh for the perfect plate.