

## Rice Pilaf with Currants and Pine Nuts

From Nick Stellino's fabulous cookbook, "Mediterranean Flavors."

Serves 4.

### Ingredients:

2 tablespoons olive oil  
½ cup finely chopped onion  
2 garlic cloves, thickly sliced  
1 bay leaf  
¼ cup currants  
¼ cup toasted pine nuts  
1/8 teaspoon saffron powder or turmeric  
¼ teaspoon cinnamon  
½ teaspoon cumin

1 cup long-grain white rice  
½ cup white wine  
1 ½ cups chicken stock

¼ teaspoon salt  
1/8 teaspoon black pepper  
2 tablespoons chopped fresh mint or Italian parsley

1. Heat olive oil in a large sauté pan on medium-high heat until sizzling, about 2 minutes. Add the onion, garlic, bay leaf, currants, pine nuts, saffron or turmeric, cinnamon, and cumin. Cook for 3-4 minutes, until the onion is soft.
2. Stir in rice and cook for 2 minutes. Add half of the white wine, stir to scrape up any browned bits from the pan bottom and cook for 1 minute, until the wine is absorbed. Stir in remaining wine, chicken stock, salt, and pepper, and bring to a boil. Cover the pan with a tight-fitting lid, reduce heat to low, and simmer about 18-20 minutes.
3. Remove from heat and let sit for 5 minutes. Stir rice to fluff, remove bay leaf, and stir in mint or parsley. Pilaf is ready to serve, or leave it in the covered pan 15-20 minutes before serving.

### *Notes:*

- You can sub in raisins for currants. When I don't have white wine on hand, I have replaced the ½ cup of white wine with ¼ cup white *cooking* wine and ¼ cup chicken stock, or a ½ cup chicken stock altogether (i.e., resulting in 2 cups of required stock).
- Obviously, it's optimal to be able to prepare this dish shortly before being served; barring that, this rice will tolerate oven or microwave reheating. If you need to transport and reheat, I would suggest holding the mint or parsley aside and stirring it in *after* reheating so the herbs remains bright and fresh.