

Qui's Basmati Pilaf

Qui was a Vedantic nun in the early 1960s and learned the intricacies of cooking the then-unheard-of-in-American-homes basmati rice, a favorite in the ashram kitchen. One of her special preparations when she comes to visit is this rice served with Yellow Split Pea Soup with Fresh Lemon (page XX) poured over and long pieces of butter-fried banana halves on the side. This is a delicious, most basic pilaf, one you will use alot.

Machine: Medium (6 cup) rice cooker

Yield: Serves 3

2 tablespoons unsalted butter

1 cup basmati rice

1 1/2 cups water

Dash of fine sea salt

Place the rice in a fine strainer or bowl, rinse with cold water, and drain two to four times. The water will be chalky and slightly foamy. Spread the wet rice out with your hands on a clean tea towel on the counter. Let air-dry at least 1 hour, until cooking time.

Turn on the rice cooker. Place the butter in the rice bowl. When melted, add the rice and cook, stirring, until all the grains are evenly coated, just ever so slightly golden, and hot. Add the water and salt to the rice in cooker. Stir just to combine, close the cover and let rice complete cooking cycle. Let steam on the Keep Warm cycle for 10 minutes. Spoon into bowls to serve.