

Iraqi Roasted Salmon with Tomato and Lemon

Yield: Serves 8 to 10

Prep Time: 20 Minutes

Cook Time: 20 Minutes

Ingredients:

3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

2 medium yellow onions, minced

2 scallions, white and green parts separated and thinly sliced

2 teaspoons ground coriander

1 teaspoon ground cumin

1 teaspoon turmeric

½ teaspoon cayenne pepper

1 (6 ounces) can tomato paste

2 teaspoons finely grated lemon zest

Kosher salt

1 (3 pound) whole side of salmon, skin-on

Lemon wedges for serving

Directions:

1. Preheat the oven to 475° F. Line a half sheet pan with aluminum foil.
2. In a medium skillet, heat the olive oil over medium-high heat. Add the onions and scallion whites and cook, stirring often, until softened and lightly caramelized, 10-12 minutes. Stir in the coriander, cumin, turmeric, and cayenne and cook, stirring continuously, until fragrant, about 1 minute.
3. Stir in the tomato paste and cook stirring often, until well incorporated and caramelized to the color of rust, 3 to 4 minutes. Remove from the heat and stir in the lemon zest. Season with salt and let cool slightly.
4. Place the side of salmon on the prepared sheet pan, skin-side down (and arranged diagonally to fit, if necessary), and season with heavy pinch of salt. Spread the tomato mixture over the top of the salmon in an even layer. Roast for 15-20 minutes, until the salmon is golden and reaches an internal temperature of 145° F (If desired, broil the salmon for 2 to 3 minutes to get more color).
5. Garnish the salmon with the scallion greens, then serve with lemon wedges.

Robina's Polo with Tahdig (Crispy Persian Rice)

Yield: Serves 6 to 8

Prep Time: 20 minutes, plus one hour soaking time

Cook Time: 40 minutes

Ingredients:

3 cups uncooked basmati rice, rinsed

3 tablespoons kosher salt

¼ tsp Saffron threads finely ground with a mortar and pestle

¼ cup boiling water

8 tablespoons (1 stick) unsalted butter, melted

½ cup plain full-fat Greek Yogurt

1 large egg yolk

Directions:

1. Put the rice in a large bowl and add cold water to cover by 1 inch and 1 tablespoon of salt. Let soak for one hour, then drain.
2. Meanwhile, in a medium bowl, combine the saffron with the boiling water, let sit until bright red, about 10 minutes. Whisk in 1 tablespoon of the salt and 6 tablespoons of the melted butter.
3. In another medium bowl, whisk the yogurt and egg yolk with half the saffron butter until smooth.
4. Bring a large pot of water to a boil. Season with the remaining 1 tablespoon of salt. Add the rice and boil until just tender, but not fully cooked, about 5 minutes, then drain.
5. Grease a shallow 10-inch non-stick pot with the remaining 2 tablespoons of melted butter. Gently stir 3 cups of the parboiled rice into the yogurt mixture until the rice is well coated. Spread the coated rice over the bottom of the greased pot and 2 inches up the sides. Top with the remaining parboiled rice, then drizzle the remaining saffron butter over the top.
6. Wrap a kitchen towel around the lid of the pot, covering the bottom, then placing the lid on the top. Place the pot over medium-high heat and cook until you begin to hear the rice sizzling loudly, 4 to 5 minutes. Reduce the heat to low and cook until the rice is golden brown, 20 to 25 minutes. To know when the tahdig is ready, you'll begin to smell toasted rice and you can even take a peek at the side with a spatula to ensure the edges are golden.
7. Remove from the heat and run a rubber spatula around the sides of the pot to ensure the rice doesn't stick. Place a platter over the top and carefully but quickly invert them together, remove the pot so the crispy rice is on top, then serve.