



Chicken Biryani

Biryani is a rice and meat dish, originating among the Muslims of the Indian subcontinent. There are many different versions of this dish, but whether you use chicken, lamb or fish, the secret to a delicious biryani is *basmati rice*. And don't forget the potatoes. A true “rys, vleis en aartappels” dish (*translation: a hearty rice, meat and potato dish!*).

This makes one large pot of food and should serve 6-8 people, but I have seen fewer people finish this in one sitting.



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Ingredients

- 4 cups basmati rice
- 1 piece cassia (substitute a cinnamon stick)
- 3 cardamom pods
- 2 tsp salt
- 1 cup brown lentils
- 2 onions, sliced in rings
- 1 cup sunflower oil
- 6 potatoes, peeled and quartered
- 8 – 12 chicken pieces (thighs and drumsticks)
- 125g butter
- 1 cup boiling water
- 1 generous pinch saffron strands

Marinade

2 cups plain yoghurt
1 (410g) can chopped peeled tomatoes
2 cinnamon quills
2 bay leaves
6 cloves
1 Tbs ground cumin
2 tsp ground coriander
1 tsp turmeric
1 tsp mustard seeds
2 Tbs chicken masala
4 allspice
2 garlic cloves, minced
2cm piece ginger, minced
1 green chilli, chopped
Salt and pepper to taste

Method

1. Rinse rice and place in large pot with enough water to cook. Add the cassia, cardamom and salt. Cook until just soft. Put aside.
2. Cook the lentils in water and salt until almost done. They should still be slightly firm. Put aside.
3. Heat the oil in a large cast iron pot (with lid). Add the onions and fry over medium heat until golden brown. Remove the onions with a slotted spoon and put aside.
4. Fry the potatoes in the same oil until golden brown. Remove with slotted spoon and put aside. Do not discard the oil.
5. Mix all the ingredients for the marinade and add ½ the fried onions. Season the chicken pieces with salt and pepper and cover with marinade. Allow to rest for at least 1 hour.
6. Preheat the oven to 180°C. To the pot with the oil previously used, add ½ the cooked rice. Place the chicken pieces and marinade on top and follow with a layer of potatoes, a layer of lentils and a final layer of rice. Finish with the rest of the fried onions and dot with the butter. Soak the saffron strands in the boiled water and pour over the dish. Cover with a tight-fitting lid.
7. Heat on the stove top on high heat for 5-10 minutes and then place the pot with tight fitting lid in the preheated oven and cook for 1 hour.
8. Serve hot. Garnish with fresh coriander and enjoy with a tomato sambal and always, dhai - a Cape Malay accompaniment for spicy meat dishes made with yoghurt, spices and coriander.

Tomato Sambal

4 large tomatoes, chopped
1 medium onion, finely chopped
1 green chilli, finely chopped
1 Tbs brown vinegar
1 Tbs olive oil
1 tsp salt
1 tsp sugar
1 Tbs coriander, finely chopped

Mix all the ingredients.

Dhai

1 cup plain yoghurt
1 tsp garlic, minced
1 tsp cumin seeds
1 tsp salt
½ tsp finely chopped green chilli

1. Mix everything in a blender/food processor.
2. Add a handful finely chopped coriander and mix well. Allow to stand for 1 hour to thicken and for the flavours to develop.



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