

# GAME BIRYANI

#Game4Spice

The regal festive finale to the #Game4Spice tour with a recipe by the Empress of Indian cuisine, Madhur Jaffrey which I have adapted only in the sense of accommodating the shorter cooking time of game meat compared to mutton or even lamb. A meal in itself a biryani may be served with a yoghurt dish but a salad is also an ideal accompaniment.

## INGREDIENTS (SERVES 4-6)

- ❖ 300-450g basmati rice
- ❖ 600-800g boneless mixed game meats, cut into 1½" pieces
- ❖ *Crispy-fried onions*: 2 onions, 2 tbsp oil
- ❖ 2 tbsp sunflower oil
- ❖ *Optional*: 1 blade of mace, 1" cinnamon stick, 1-2 dried red chillies
- ❖ 150-200g Greek-style (full-fat) yoghurt
- ❖ 100-150ml game or chicken stock or water
- ❖ *Rice spices*: 4-6 cloves, 4-6 cardamoms
- ❖ A few knobs of butter
- ❖ *Saffron-infused milk*: ¼ tsp saffron strands soaked in 2 tbsp warm milk for 30 mins
- ❖ Salt and freshly ground black pepper
  
- ❖ *Biryani Masala*:  
5 cloves, ½ tsp black peppercorns, 8 cardamoms, 1 tsp cumin seeds, 1 tsp coriander seeds, ¼ of a nutmeg, ¼ tsp cayenne pepper.
  
- ❖ *Brown onion paste*:  
1 onion, ½" piece of ginger, 4-5 garlic cloves, all coarsely chopped, 1½ tbsp flaked almonds, 4 tsp sunflower oil, water (approx. 5 tbsp)
  
- ❖ *Garnish*:  
2-3 tbsp sultanas soaked in hot water for 2 mins, 2-3 tbsp flaked almonds toasted in a dry frying pan until golden, *Crispy-fried onions*



## DIRECTIONS

1. Wash the rice several times then soak in cold water with 1 tsp salt for at least 30 mins.
2. Grind the *Biryani Masala* spices to a powder then mix in the cayenne pepper. Coat the meat in the *Biryani Masala* and leave for 30 mins.
3. To make the *crispy-fried onions*, halve the onions and slice them very finely. Heat the oil in a wide frying pan and fry the onions (in batches if needed), sprinkled with salt, for 10 mins until deep brown. Spread on a plate lined with kitchen paper to crisp.
4. For the *brown onion paste*, fry the onion in the oil for 10 mins or until golden. Add the garlic and ginger for 1 min, cool then blend to a paste with the almonds and water as required.
5. Heat the oil in a large pan. Fry the *optional* spices until they sizzle then add the marinated meat. Fry over a high heat for 2-3 mins until the meat starts to brown then stir in the *brown*

*onion paste* and cook for about 10 mins until the paste thickens. Allow to cool a little, then gradually incorporate the yoghurt. Return to the heat and add the stock/water and cook over a gentle heat for about 30 mins until the only gravy remaining is clinging to the meat. Season to taste.

6. Meanwhile bring a large pan of water to the boil with the *rice spices* then add the rice and boil for 5-7 mins until three-quarters cooked (when squeezed the core should still feel firm). Drain and spread on a large plate to steam dry for about 10 mins.
7. Heat the oven to 150°C and grease a casserole with butter. Put a shallow layer of rice in the bottom then sprinkle over a little *saffron-infused milk* and some *crispy-fried onions*. Spoon the meat on top then cover with the remaining rice little by little, drizzling over the *saffron milk* in strands. Finish with some more *crispy-fried onions*, reserving a third for the garnish. Dot with butter then tightly seal the casserole with foil and put on the lid. Bake for 1 hr.
8. While the biryani is in the oven, prepare the *garnish* ingredients. To serve, spoon the biryani onto a platter and garnish with the sultanas, almonds and *crispy-fried onions*.