



Rice Stuffing with Chestnuts

By Maha Khoury Meo



Today, I would like to share the recipe of rice stuffing with chestnuts that many Palestinian families prepare for Christmas. The recipe makes enough for four to six people.

Ingredients

- 2 c rice
- 700 g lean ground beef
- 1 c boiled chestnuts, cut into small pieces
- 3 c chicken broth or boiled water
- 1 ½ tsp salt
- ¾ tsp black pepper
- ¾ tsp allspice
- 1 tsp freshly ground nutmeg
- ¼ c vegetable oil

Method

Wash the rice in cold water and set aside. Heat the oil in a pan over medium heat. Add the (minced) meat, salt, pepper, allspice, and nutmeg. Stir well, then cover until the meat is cooked. Add the chestnuts, washed rice, and broth or boiled water. Stir a bit, then lower the heat. Cover the pan and let it cook for approximately 20 minutes without opening the lid until the rice is cooked. Let it rest in the pan for 10 minutes before serving. Finally, place the rice into a serving dish and top it with lots of roasted pine nuts or roasted peeled almonds or both.

No doubt the Christmas season in Palestine is one of the most beautiful and loved seasons of the year. I dare say that it has become a national holiday for everyone, particularly for children. Palestine is the Holy Land after all, and before COVID-19 hit the world, hundreds of thousands flocked to Bethlehem, the birthplace of Jesus Christ, which resulted in an economic boost not only for Bethlehem but for the whole country. Christmas trees are put up and decorated in many cities and towns in Palestine, much to everyone's enjoyment.

For those who actually celebrate Christmas in Palestine, it also means sharing good food!

The best meals of the year are normally served on Christmas Day and bring together the extended family.

Christmas dishes may include lamb, turkey, stuffed zucchini and vine leaves, all sorts of pasta dishes, *kubbeh*, and on and on – not to mention the three million side dishes, salads, and desserts!



Sahtain! Bon appétit!

