

SAFFRON-LAYERED RICE PUDDING

SERVES 4

R I C E P U D D I N G

100 g (3½ oz/½ cup) rice

1 piece mastic crystal (less than 1 g/1/25 oz)

1 tablespoon sugar

750 ml (26 fl oz/3 cups) milk

2 tablespoons rice flour

pinch of salt

S A F F R O N T O P P I N G

5 saffron threads

1 drop geranium oil (or rose water)

1 tablespoon currants

1 tablespoon pine nuts

50 g (1¾ oz/¼ cup) rice

110 g (3¾ oz/½ cup) sugar

1 tablespoon rice flour

D E C O R A T I O N (O P T I O N A L)

20 candied or roasted chickpeas

4 tablespoons pomegranate seeds

Wash the rice in cold running water to remove the excess starch.

Transfer to a saucepan, add 100 ml

(3½ fl oz) of water, bring to the boil and simmer for 10 minutes. The rice will absorb most of the water.

Crush the mastic crystal into a powder, using a mortar and pestle or the handle of a knife, and then

combine with the sugar. Heat the milk, mastic mixture and strained rice in a saucepan over medium

heat, and bring to the boil. Combine the rice flour with 125 ml (4 fl oz/½ cup) of the boiling milk

mixture and then add to the pan. Add the salt and simmer for 10 minutes, stirring constantly, to

thicken. Remove the pan from the heat and leave to cool for 5 minutes, then divide the rice pudding

equally between four 250 ml (9 fl oz/1 cup) glasses. Leave to cool completely at room temperature

and then transfer to the fridge and chill for 30 minutes.

Next, make the topping. Put the saffron threads in a bowl and cover with 60 ml (2 fl oz/¼ cup) of

warm water. Stir in the geranium oil and then leave to rest for 20 minutes. Discard the saffron threads

and set aside.

Cover the currants in warm water, leave for 10 minutes and then strain. Toast the pine nuts in a frying

pan over medium heat for 2 minutes, shaking the pan constantly to evenly brown.

Rinse the rice in cold running water to remove the excess starch.

Transfer to a saucepan and add 125

ml (4 fl oz/½ cup) of water. Bring to the boil and simmer for 10 minutes. Add another 375 ml (13 fl oz/1½ cups) of water and half the sugar, and continue to simmer for 3 minutes, stirring constantly.

Combine 125 ml (4 fl oz/½ cup) of the cooking liquid with the rice flour in a bowl. Discard the remaining rice mixture, and then pour the rice flour mixture into the pan. Add the remaining sugar and cook for a further 5 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add the saffron-infused liquid and simmer for a further 5 minutes until it starts to thicken. Add the currants and pine nuts, remove from the heat and leave to cool.

Remove the rice puddings from the fridge, cover with saffron topping and then refrigerate again for 1 hour.

Decorate the chilled *astarlı sütlaç* with the chickpeas and pomegranate seeds, and serve.

