



Portuguese Rice Pudding

Rice pudding is one of the most typical Portuguese desserts – always present at celebrations, from birthdays to weddings. It's often decorated with a relevant motif sprinkled on top in cinnamon, initials or numbers are popular for birthdays, while hearts, flowers and simple lattices are also common, so let your creative flair run free. It's called arroz doce in Portuguese, literally 'sweet rice', and originates in the region of Minho, in northern Portugal, though it's long been served all over the country. The most important thing is to stir the rice gently so as not to disturb the crust that forms on the base of the pan, otherwise you'll end up with dark flecks marring your creamy pudding. Save that crust as the cook's treat before soaking the pan!

Serves 4

INGREDIENTS

- 150g short-grained rice
- 400ml water
- Pinch salt flakes, crushed
- 1 small strip lemon rind
- 400ml milk
- ½ vanilla pod, split and scraped
- ⅓ cup castor sugar
- 1 egg yolk, lightly beaten
- Ground cinnamon, for sprinkling



METHOD

1. Wash rice well, drain it then place in a saucepan with the water, salt and lemon rind.
2. Bring to the boil, reduce heat to the lowest setting and simmer for about 20 minutes, until the water is absorbed.
3. Meanwhile, place milk in a small saucepan with the vanilla seeds and pod. Set aside.
4. After about 15 minutes (just before the rice is ready), bring milk to the boil over a low heat.
5. When the rice is cooked, remove the lemon rind from it and the vanilla pod from the milk.
6. Stir the hot milk into the rice and return to the boil.
7. Reduce heat and simmer for about 15 minutes until the rice is soft and creamy, gently stirring regularly without disturbing the crust that forms on the base of the pan.
8. Add sugar and stir gently for a further couple of minutes.
9. Remove from heat, beat in egg yolk, return to a low heat and stir gently for a minute.
10. Spoon into 4 x 200ml ramekins, set aside to cool then cover and refrigerate until cold.
11. Serve sprinkled with cinnamon.