



sharing our Greek culinary heritage

Peter's Rizo-Rovani

(referred to as 'rovani' in the recipe)

For the rovani

500g medium-grain rice
500g raw sugar
500g honey
120ml extra virgin olive oil
1 teaspoon cinnamon
¼ teaspoon nutmeg
2.1 litres water

For the syrup

300ml water
3 cinnamon sticks
100g raw sugar
4 tablespoons honey
1 piece of lemon rind
6 cloves

Grinding the rice

For this dish to work, you must only use medium-grain rice, so please don't substitute with any other grain type.

Using a blender, grind the rice in small batches, until the grains are about one third of their original length. Only a few seconds of pulsing is all that is required.

Sift the ground rice to remove all of the rice flour. Place the sifted rice into a bowl and set aside. Discard the rice flour. It is very important to remove the rice flour, otherwise it will cause the rovani mixture to thicken quickly, without allowing the rice to cook and the mixture to caramelize.

Preparing the rovani

Pour 2.1 litres of water into a large pot (approximately 3 litre) and add the sugar, honey, oil, cinnamon and nutmeg. Stir the ingredients together. Slowly heat the ingredients to a gentle simmer.

Add the rice in small amounts, stirring between each addition.

Gently simmer and continually stir the mixture for at least 1 to 1½ hours. The mixture is ready when it has caramelised slightly, the rice is *al dente*, and it comes away from the edges of the pot when you stir it. This is the most critical stage of the cooking process and requires patience and muscle power.

Use olive oil to baste a round aluminium baking-dish with approximate dimensions – 34cm diameter and 4-5cm depth.

Immediately pour the rovani mixture into the dish and gently shake the dish to even out the mixture.

Allow the rovani to cool in the baking-dish at room temperature for at least 1½ hours.

Once the mixture has cooled, use a flat-edged knife to cut the rovani into 4cm wide strips. Scrape the knife clean and dip the knife in boiled water between each slice. Rotate the baking-dish and cut the rovani again in 4cm strips to create diamond shaped pieces.

Place a clove in the centre of each piece.

Baking the rovani

Place the rovani in a conventional oven pre-heated to 180°C and bake for at least 1½ hours, or until the top has caramelised to a deep golden-brown.

Making the syrup

Place all of the syrup ingredients into a small pot and bring to a gentle boil. Boil for 8 minutes.

Set the syrup aside and allow it to cool.

Remove the cinnamon sticks, lemon rind and cloves from the cooled syrup.

Finishing the rovani

Once the rovani has baked, remove it from the oven and immediately pour the cooled syrup all over the top. The syrup will be absorbed by the rovani and will thicken as it cools again.

Allow the rovani to cool at room temperature for at least 1½ hours.

Serving the rovani

Run a flat-edged knife around the outside of the rovani. Using the score lines as a guide, cut the rovani into diamond shaped pieces and serve.

Enjoy!

Recipe makes 50 pieces.