Mouthwatering Vegan

RICE AND LENTILS WITH SPINACH
(Pilafi me Fakes) (Miriam Sorrell)

"My mother, a Greek housewife, used to make this in different ways – here is one way with my twist. I love it . . because it's delicious, and also because it's a versatile dish and so very easy to prepare."

INGREDIENTS

1½ cups pre-cooked lentils or 2/3 cup of dried brown lentils (the flat ones), boiled and drained
1 cup pre-cooked long grain white rice (works well with basmati too)
1 shallot, thinly chopped
2 cloves garlic, chopped
1/3 cup sherry, white wine, or veg broth
1 pkg fresh spinach, steamed and well drained (after it's steamed, chop it a little)
1 Tbsp red wine vinegar
1/4 tsp salt
2 Tbsp tomato puree
½ tsp chili flakes (optional)
Cinnamon stick
2 bay leaves
A splash of lemon juice and some lemon zest
A pinch of fennel seeds
¼ tsp oregano
Chopped dill or flat leaf parsley, for garnishing
Vegan feta cheese (optional)

METHOD

- Heat the sherry or other liquid in a large pan, and sauté your onions and garlic.
- Add your spices and stir well, then stir in the tomato puree, making sure it is well distributed, and keep it on a high heat for a minute or so.
- Next, add the the lentils and herbs, stir well, and then add the cooked rice. Continue to stir for a couple of minutes, then gently add the remaining ingredients.
- Garnish and serve with vegan feta, or eat as is.



Editor's Notes:

I adapted this dish by replacing the oil used in sautéing the onions and garlic with sherry, wine, or broth.

There are other ways you could make this dish more Whole-Food Plant-Based.

It calls for white rice, but you could easily use brown rice, which is more nutritious (you can get basmati brown rice). The recipe wants you to cook the rice before starting this dish (it refers to "pre-cooked rice'); remember that brown rice takes longer to cook than white rice (about 45 minutes vs. 15 minutes) so plan ahead if you want to use brown rice for the dish.

Regarding the optional vegan feta, the commercial product is a processed food. Check labels, as some brands of vegan cheeses are made entirely from whole-food ingredients like nuts. There are also recipes out there for vegan feta using tofu, and these would be more "whole-food" than the purchased products.





Miriam Sorrell is the recipe creator and photographer behind **Mouthwatering Vegan**. She describes her food as "rustic, exotic with Middle Eastern and Mediterranean flair and dynamic, occasional Asian elements." Mouthwatering Vegan does use oil, but you can readily adapt recipes to work around processed ingredients.