

Cooking with



Weaving stories of hand knotted rugs,
Pakistani artisans & fair trade into our cooking.

Battle of the Pakistani Biryanis

Well, not really a battle but indeed, everyone has their own favorite biryani recipe and our family is no different.

Yousaf made his mother's favorite biryani recipe.

But our sister-in-law Asma has her family's favorite recipe as well. Ingredients vary a bit but technique remains the same.

Which is your favorite?

Or perhaps you've already made your own family recipe? And if you did, what did you do differently?



Asma's Biryani

2 cups basmati rice, rinsed and soaked in water for 30 minutes
1/4 cup cooking oil
1 medium onion, chopped
1 teaspoon garlic paste
1 lemon
1 teaspoon ginger paste
3 medium tomatoes, chopped
1/4 cup yogurt
1 cinnamon stick, broken
3 bay leaves
6 whole cloves
1 tablespoon coriander powder
1 tablespoon paprika
1 tablespoon salt
1 green chili, whole

10 whole black peppercorns
few drops yellow food coloring
green cardamom pods
1 cup cilantro

For Chicken Biryani:

2 pounds boneless, skinless chicken thighs

For Vegetable Biryani:

1 1/2 cup green peas
2 potatoes, peeled and cubed
2 carrots, chopped quite small

ASMA'S MISE EN PLACE

- One large stockpan or a dutch oven
- One small to medium pot to parboil rice
- Medium size mixing bowl to assist with layering the biryani in the final step
- 2 wooden or silicone spatulas for chicken and for rice
- A serving dish to garnish and serve.
- A hungry household to enjoy your final dishes.

INSTRUCTIONS

In the large stock pan or dutch over, heat oil on medium high. Add chopped onions and cook until they change color. Add the black peppercorns, cloves and cinnamon stick. Add chicken (if making the chicken biryani) or add potatoes, carrots & peas (if making vegetable biryani) and cook for 10 minutes.

Add dry spices, tomatoes, ginger paste & garlic paste. Then add the yogurt and let cook for five minutes. Add green chili and cilantro. Reduce heat to low and cook until well blended. Finally, add two tablespoons fresh lemon juice.

At this point, drain rice and put into medium pot with two cups of water. Cover and bring to a boil but only cook until rice is halfway done. Turn off burner and drain the excess water.

Now it's time for the biryani magic! Spoon 1/2 of the chicken or vegetable mixture into the medium mixing bowl. Carefully (and with a non-metal spoon or spatula) layer 1/2 of the parboiled rice on top of the remaining mixture in the large pan. Layer mixture in side mixing bowl and top with remaining rice. Once rice and chicken are layered together in the big stockpan or dutch oven, add a few drops of yellow food coloring. Cover with a tight lid and steam biryani on low for 3-4 minutes. Turn off the heat but keep the lid on to continue to steam the biryani and merge the spice flavors together.

To serve, spoon biryani from the edges and transfer to a large serving dish. Pulling from the sides mixes the rice and chicken or vegetable sauce in a perfect balance so you can enjoy an excellent blend of spices and ingredients in each bite. Top with chopped cilantro and serve with mint raita.