

Mediterranean Vegetable Rice (Serves 4)



Ingredients

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 300 g basmati rice• 1 small red onion• 1 courgette• 4 ripe mixed-colour tomatoes• 4 tablespoons green pesto | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• olive oil• 8 black olives , (stone in)• white wine vinegar• extra virgin olive oil• 4 sprigs of fresh basil• $\frac{1}{2} \times 125$ g ball of mozzarella cheese |
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Method

1. Preheat the grill to high.
2. Tip the rice into a 25cm x 35cm roasting tray (or use a large round shallow ovenproof pan or tray, like I've done here, if you have one), pour over 650ml of boiling salted water and cook over a medium heat for 12 minutes, stirring occasionally, then turn off the heat.
3. Meanwhile, peel the red onion, then very finely slice with the courgette, or use a mandolin (use the guard!). Finely slice the tomatoes into rounds.
4. Randomly bomb the pesto over the rice, then start layering up your veg: cover the rice with rounds of onion, then move on to a layer of courgettes, overlapping them as you go, followed by a layer of tomatoes. Repeat, moving slightly nearer the middle each time until you've covered the whole surface (use the picture to help you out – it might look a bit fiddly, but it's child's play to make).
5. Drizzle with 2 tablespoons of olive oil and sprinkle with black pepper, then place under the grill on the middle shelf for 25 minutes, or until beautifully gratinated.
6. Meanwhile, for the tapenade, destone and very finely chop the olives, then mix with $\frac{1}{2}$ a tablespoon each of vinegar and extra virgin olive oil.
7. To serve, pick over the basil leaves, dot over the olive tapenade and delicately tear over the mozzarella.



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