

## 23b Spiced pilau rice

Serves 4

### *Ingredients*

2 tablespoons light olive oil (or other flavourless vegetable oil)  
1 small onion, finely chopped  
1 teaspoon whole cumin seeds  
250g white basmati rice (or measured to the half level in a clear pyrex measuring jug)  
1 teaspoon ground coriander  
2 inch piece cinnamon stick or 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon  
4 whole cloves  
4 whole cardamom pods, lightly crushed using the handle of a knife or in a pestle and mortar  
1 bayleaf  
few twists of black pepper from the mill  
1 chicken or vegetable stock cube dissolved in 570ml (1 pint) boiling water

1. Heat the oil over a medium heat in a large heavy bottomed saucepan or Le Creuset type casserole dish. When hot, put in the onion and stir and fry until the onion pieces have browned just a little.
2. Add the cumin seeds and stir and fry for a minute.
3. Add the rice, coriander, cinnamon, cloves, cardamom pods and bayleaf and stir gently for 3-4 minutes still over a medium heat until all the rice grains are coated with oil and have begun to toast lightly. If the rice begins to stick to the bottom of the pan, turn the heat down to low.
4. Pour in the stock, bring the rice to the boil, stir just a couple of times with a wooden spoon then put the lid on the pan, turn the heat down to its lowest setting and cook for 15 minutes exactly using a timer.
5. Turn the heat off and leave the pan to stand for a further 5 minutes before serving. Do not lift the lid while the rice is cooking as it will let the precious steam escape. The heat needs to be very low to avoid the rice sticking to the bottom of the pan and burning.