



Hourensou Garlic Rice

NIBBLEDISH CONTRIBUTOR

Ingredients

- 1 bunch Chinese Spinach (about 6-8 plants) - Western Spinach can be used but I prefer the lighter texture of the Chinese Spinach for this dish
- 2-3 cloves Garlic (minced)
- 2-3 cups cooked short grain rice (warm)
- Olive Oil
- Chili-infused Oil - I use a homemade habanero and garlic oil that packs a perfect punch without the confusion or colouring of a Chinese chili oil.
- Salt
- Lemon wedges (optional)

Instructions

This is a really, really simple dish that is a kind of fusion between of Greek spanakoriso and Japanese garlic rice. It's great by itself as an entree, midweek main or rice course in a larger meal, but can also be served as an accompaniment to grilled meat or seafood.

1. Wash, spin and roughly chop the spinach.
2. Heat about 2 tablespoons of oil in a large frypan over medium heat (using the chili-infused and regular oil in proportions to taste), immediately add in the minced garlic and let the garlic release its flavour for 30 seconds or so without browning it.
3. Add in the spinach, spread it over the pan and cook uncovered for a few minutes until the spinach is wilted. You want to drive off as much water from the spinach as possible, otherwise it

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4. Turn off the heat and add in the warm cooked rice.
 5. Toss everything together and salt liberally. You are not trying to fry the rice, but rather just making sure that everything is distributed evenly and coated in the flavourful oil.
 6. Serve with a wedge of lemon (if you like).

The great thing about this dish is the clean and simple flavour, with just a hint of chili heat to keep it from being boring. With such a simple flavour, it's important to get the seasoning just right.

I make my own habanero and garlic oil by chopping fresh habaneros and garlic and heating them both slowly in a cup or so olive oil for 10 minutes or so to drive off a lot of the water (not browning anything). It's the perfect ingredient for this dish because the oil doesn't discolour the dish and the habaneros add a lovely touch of heat without the strong flavour of chili that can sometimes overpower a lightly flavoured dish such as this.

I like to make this dish with leftover rice from the night before that's still warming in the rice cooker. If the rice is already cooked this can be made and on the table in less than 5 minutes. If you have leftover spinach in the fridge that's going to go bad, you can chop it and fry it up by itself (no oil, salt or garlic), leave it to dry a bit in the pan and then freeze it for use in this dish.

You could play to the Greek influence and serve this with a roast chicken or grilled lamb, or as an accompaniment to seafood skewers or baked fish. You could even use this to stuff peppers or tomatoes for roasting.

I personally think this is a near perfect match with **yakitori**. I often will make this and then wander to the little yakitori stand a few doors down from me and pick up a few skewers of grilled chicken (shio only, not tare), asparagus and shiitake mushrooms. Served altogether with a thick-sliced, sweet, chilled fresh tomato (hiyashi tomato) and some excellent salt this makes a perfect weekend lunch. These kind of simple flavours work really well in summer and spring.