

Asparagus, Fennel and Pea Pilau

This recipe became my go-to over the summer when there were greater appetites to satisfy vs. time. There are countless variations, so let your imagination and your CSA farm box dictate the ingredients. Over the summer I subbed in cut green beans from the garden, chunks of baby summer squash and always a healthy portion of sliced mushrooms.

Asparagus, fennel and pea pilau

Prep 10 min

Soak 20 min

Cook 30 min

Serves 4

350g basmati rice

750ml prepared vegetable stock

3 tbsp coconut or sunflower oil

2 red onions, peeled and finely sliced

2 green finger chillies, very finely sliced

1 medium fennel bulb (about 250g), trimmed and thinly sliced

250g asparagus, woody ends trimmed and cut into 4cm-long pieces

200g frozen petit pois, defrosted

1½ tsp ground cumin

1½ tsp garam masala

¾ tsp salt

1 big handful mint leaves, chopped

1 big handful dill, chopped

1 lemon, cut into wedges, to serve

Wash the rice in cold water until it runs clear, then leave to soak for 20 minutes. Put the rice in a large saucepan for

which you have a lid and pour over the stock. Cover the pan, bring to a boil, boil for two minutes, then turn down the heat to a whisper and leave to cook for 10-12 minutes. Turn off the heat and leave the rice, still covered, to steam through until needed.

Meanwhile, heat the oil in a large, lidded pan on a medium flame. Once hot, add the onions and cook for six to eight minutes, until translucent and softening, but not yet coloured. Add the chillies, cook for another two minutes, then stir in the fennel and a couple of tablespoons of water, and cover the pan. Leave to cook for eight minutes, until soft. Add then the asparagus, peas, cumin, garam masala and salt. Stir, cover again, cook for three to five minutes more, then take off the heat.

Fold the herbs and rice into the vegetable mixture – breaking up any clumps of rice delicately with your hands – then transfer to a serving dish and serve with wedges of lemon on the side.

Adapted from Meera Sodha, *The New Vegan*, *The Telegraph*