



**Makes 6 cups pilaf + 1½ cups topper**

**Preparation Time: 20 minutes**

**Cook Time: 30 minutes**

### INGREDIENTS:

1 cup chopped onion

2 cloves garlic, minced

1 teaspoon Aleppo pepper, or ¾ teaspoon paprika plus ¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper

¾ teaspoon sea salt

½ teaspoon ground cinnamon

¼ teaspoon ground cloves

¼ teaspoon ground cardamom

2½ cups dry red rice

1¼ cups chopped peeled acorn squash or butternut squash

½ cup raisins

1½ cups finely chopped cucumber

2 tablespoons chopped fresh mint

1 teaspoon sesame seeds, toasted

## Middle Eastern Red Rice Pilaf

Red rice is named for its red bran layer, which gives it a higher **antioxidant content** than brown rice. Here, this vibrant grain is cooked in a medley of warming Middle Eastern spices to produce the perfect balance of sweet, spicy, and savory flavors. Cubes of earthy acorn or butternut squash and a sprinkling of tangy raisins add delightful contrast to the fragrant rice, absorbing the flavors and adding a slightly creamy texture to the chewy grains. A cooling garnish of minted cucumber adds brightness to the rich dish, ensuring each serving is equal parts comforting and refreshing. Serve this red rice pilaf alongside a hearty main course, such as a falafel platter complete with **homemade hummus**.

For more vegan pilaf recipes, check out these tasty ideas:

- [Herbed Instant Pot Rice Pilaf](#)
- [Farro Pilaf with Veggies and Blackened Melon](#)
- [Ethiopian Wild Rice Pilaf](#)
- [Barley and Sweet Potato Pilaf](#)

By Juliana Hale

- 1** In a large saucepan cook onion and garlic over medium 4 minutes or until tender, stirring occasionally and adding water, 1 to 2 tablespoons at a time, as needed to prevent sticking. Stir in Aleppo pepper, salt, cinnamon, cloves, and cardamom. Cook 1 minute.
- 2** Add rice and squash; stir to coat. Add 3½ cups water and the raisins. Bring to boiling; reduce heat. Cover and simmer 30 minutes or until liquid is absorbed. Remove from heat; let stand 10 minutes.
- 3** For topper, in a small bowl stir together cucumber, mint, and sesame seeds. Serve with rice mixture.