

BULGUR WHEAT PILAF WITH MEAT AND VEGETABLES (A Traditional Armenian One-Dish Meal)

- 16 oz ground beef
- Pafflower or sunflower oil, as needed
- 2 cups coarse or extra-coarse grain bulgur; #4 or #5
- 2 tablespoons tomato paste
- 1 tablespoon red pepper paste
- 1 teaspoon red Aleppo pepper; or 4:1 ratio sweet paprika and cayenne pepper
- 1/3 teaspoon 7-spice mix; store-bought, or recipe included below
- 3/4-to-1 teaspoon salt
- Scant 1/4 teaspoon black pepper
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 medium onion (1 1/4 cups), diced
- 3 tomatoes (1 1/2 cups), diced
- 3 Jalapeno peppers, diced
- 4 cups vegetable stock

7-Spice Mix:

- 1 tablespoon ground allspice
- 1 tablespoon ground cinnamon
- 2 teaspoons ground white pepper
- 1 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1 teaspoon ground coriander seed
- 1 teaspoon grated nutmeg
- 1 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1 teaspoon ground cloves

Sauté ground beef on medium heat until liquid is almost gone. Add some oil and sauté a little longer until lightly browned all over. Add bulgur, stir-cook 2-5 minutes and then transfer into a bowl.

In the same pot, add some oil, tomato and pepper pastes and stir-cook for about 3 minutes. Add red pepper, 7-spice blend, salt, black pepper, bay leaf and onion; cook until onions are translucent. Add tomatoes; cook a little more. Add Jalapeno peppers and cook a little longer.

Add vegetable stock and bring to a gentle boil. Remove bay leaf. Return bulgur and beef mixture to the pot and bring to a boil once more. Keep on a gentle boil for 2 minutes then cover and cook on medium-low heat for 30 minutes. Change heat setting to the lowest, place a kitchen towel under the cover and cook for another 15-to-20 minutes to desired consistency. Fluff with fork and serve; pairs well with yoghurt.