

## SHOLEH ZARD // PERSIAN RICE PUDDING

1/2 cup short-grain or medium-grain rice, washed until water runs clear

Pinch of salt

4 cups water, plus another 1/2 cup and 1 tablespoon hot water

1/2 -to- 1 cup white granulated sugar

1/2 teaspoon saffron strands, crushed with a pinch of sugar

1/4 -to- 1/2 cup rosewater

2 ' cinnamon stick

2 pods green cardamom, lightly crushed; *OR* 1/4 -to- 1/2 teaspoon ground cardamom

1 -to- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter, cubed

Garnish:

Cinnamon, ground pistachio, almond, candied orange peel and rose petals

Combine cardamom and rosewater; set aside. Mix pulverized saffron with one tablespoon hot water; set aside.

To a pot, add rice, salt and 4 cups water. Bring to a boil then simmer on the lowest setting 30-to-40 minutes until rice is tender. Skim white foam from surface as it forms.

Mix sugar in half a cup hot water until dissolved; add to pot. Simmer 30 minutes until dense; stirring occasionally.

Add saffron infused water to pot; simmer an additional 30 minutes.

Add rose water and cardamom mixture, cinnamon stick and butter. Mix well and continue to simmer as you stir until pudding is completely dense and tacky. Discard cinnamon stick and cardamom pods.

Divide between 4-to-5 individual serving bowls, cool and refrigerate 4 hours. Once chilled, decorate as desired.