

Yayla Çorbası (Yogurt and Rice Soup)

Turkish · Soup · Easy · 35 min total · Serves 6

Yayla çorbası, whose name means highland pasture, is a silky soup of rice and yogurt thickened with egg and flour. Dried mint butter poured over the top gives it a cool, tangy flavor that is distinctly Turkish.

Ingredients

- 0.5 cup short-grain white rice (rinsed; long-grain works too)
- 6 cup water (for cooking the rice; keep the liquid)
- 1 tsp salt (divided)
- 3 cup plain whole-milk yogurt (full-fat, room temperature; Turkish-style or Greek works if it is not thin)
- 1 large egg (at room temperature)
- 2 tbsp all-purpose flour
- 3 tbsp butter
- 2 tsp dried mint (crumbled between your palms)
- 0.5 tsp Aleppo pepper (pul biber) (optional; sweet paprika is a mild swap)

Method

1. Bring the water and half the salt to a boil in a medium pot, add the rinsed rice, and reduce the heat to medium-low so it simmers gently for 15 to 18 minutes, until the grains are very soft and split and the water looks slightly cloudy.
2. While the rice cooks, whisk the yogurt, egg and flour together in a large bowl until completely smooth, with no lumps of flour and no strands of egg white.
3. Ladle about 1 cup of the hot rice cooking liquid into the yogurt mixture, about 1/4 cup at a time, whisking constantly, until the mixture is warm to the touch (about 140°F / 60°C); this gradual tempering keeps the yogurt from curdling.
4. Reduce the heat under the pot to low, then whisk the tempered yogurt mixture back into the rice in a thin stream, stirring constantly with a wooden spoon for about 5 minutes and keeping the soup just below a simmer (about 185°F / 85°C), since boiling makes yogurt soup grainy.
5. Cook over low heat for 3 more minutes, stirring, until the soup is thick, glossy and coats the back of a spoon, then taste and add the remaining salt if needed.
6. Melt the butter in a small skillet over medium heat for about 2 minutes until it foams and turns golden with brown flecks, then remove the pan from the heat and stir in the dried mint and Aleppo pepper for 20 seconds until fragrant but not burnt.
7. Ladle the soup into warm bowls, drizzle each with a spoonful of the mint butter, and serve immediately with crusty bread.