

Firin Sütlaç (Baked Turkish Rice Pudding)

Turkish · Dessert · Medium · 65 min total · Serves 8

Firin sütlaç is a creamy Turkish rice pudding thickened with cornstarch, spooned into small dishes and blistered under a hot broiler for its freckled crust. It is eaten chilled, usually in small bowls after dinner.

Ingredients

- 0.5 cup short-grain pudding rice (rinsed until the water runs mostly clear; arborio works in a pinch)
- 1 cup water (to pre-cook the rice)
- 5.5 cup whole milk (for cooking the pudding)
- 0.5 cup cold whole milk (for the cornstarch slurry)
- 0.75 cup sugar
- 3 tbsp cornstarch (whisked smooth into the cold milk)
- 1 tbsp unsalted butter
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon (for dusting the tops)
- 1 pinch fine salt

Method

1. Rinse the rice in cold water until the water runs mostly clear, then drain. Put the rice and 1 cup water in a heavy 4-quart (3.8 L) pot over medium-low heat and cook, stirring occasionally, for about 5 minutes until the water is absorbed and the grains look softened.
2. Add the 5.5 cups whole milk, the sugar and the salt. Stir well and warm over medium-low heat, stirring every few minutes so the milk does not scorch on the bottom, until the surface just begins to steam (about 180°F / 82°C).
3. Simmer gently over low heat for 30 to 35 minutes, stirring often, until the rice is very tender and the grains break apart easily when pressed between your fingers.
4. Whisk the cornstarch into the 0.5 cup cold milk until completely smooth, then pour it into the pot while stirring constantly. Keep stirring over medium-low heat for 5 to 7 minutes, until the pudding thickens enough to coat the back of a spoon and leaves a clear trail when you drag a spoon through it.
5. Remove from the heat and stir in the butter and vanilla. Ladle the pudding into 8 shallow ovenproof dishes (about 6 oz / 180 ml each), smooth the tops, and let them cool at room temperature for 15 minutes.
6. Refrigerate the dishes uncovered for at least 2 hours until firm and chilled through. The surface will form a light skin, which browns well under the broiler.
7. Heat the broiler to high (about 500°F / 260°C) and set a rack about 6 inches (15 cm) from the heat. Dust each pudding with a thin, even layer of cinnamon, then broil for 2 to 4 minutes, watching closely, until the tops show dark brown freckles and blistered spots without scorching overall.
8. Let the dishes cool for 10 minutes, then refrigerate for another 30 minutes and serve chilled, with more cinnamon on top if you like.