Cabbage Roll-Style Lentil Rice Bake

One 9×13 in (23×33 cm) dish, at least 4 qt/3.8 L;6 main-dish portions · Active 40 min · Total 1 hr 50 min

Ingredients

- 3/4 cup dry long-grain white rice, rinsed (150 g)
- 1 1/4 cups water (300 ml), for rice, or the rice packet ratio
- 3/4 cup dry green or brown lentils, picked over and rinsed (160 g)
- 3 cups water (720 ml), for lentils, with extra only as needed to keep covered
- 1 lb 5 oz green cabbage, cored and cut into short 1/2-in/1-cm ribbons (600 g prepared)
- 1/2 cup water (120 ml), for cabbage
- 2 tablespoons olive oil (30 ml)
- 1 large onion, finely chopped (200 g)
- 2 medium carrots, grated (150 g prepared)
- 3 garlic cloves, finely chopped (9 g)
- 2 cans chopped tomatoes with juice (1 lb 12 oz/800 g total)
- 1 teaspoon dried dill
- 1 teaspoon sweet paprika (2 g)
- 1/2 teaspoon fine salt (3 g)
- 1/4 teaspoon black pepper

Set out

Oven, 9×13 in (23×33 cm) baking dish, at least 4 qt/3.8 L, Two saucepans, one with a close-fitting lid, Fine sieve, Large covered skillet or wide pot, at least 4 qt/3.8 L, Large mixing bowl, Broad spoon, Rimmed baking sheet, Suitable foil or oven lid, Food thermometer

Allergens

No major allergens inherent in the listed base ingredients; check all packaged labels. Check labels and substitutions.

Make it

1. Heat oven to 375°F (190°C). Put the dish on a rimmed sheet. Simmer lentils in their 720 ml water 20–25 minutes or per packet until tender but holding shape, topping up water if needed. Drain thoroughly in the sieve.

2. While lentils cook, put cabbage and its 120 ml water in the covered skillet. Cook over medium-low heat 15–18 minutes, turning occasionally, until nearly tender. Transfer cabbage and any small remaining liquid to the mixing bowl.

3. Meanwhile start rice: bring it and its 300 ml water, or the packet ratio, to a boil in the lidded saucepan. Lower heat, cover and cook 15–18 minutes or per packet until tender and liquid absorbed. Take off heat, leave covered 10 minutes, then fluff and move promptly into assembly while still hot. Keep this a continuous preparation.

4. Heat oil in the emptied skillet. Soften onion and carrot 8–10 minutes; add garlic 30 seconds. Add tomatoes, dill, paprika, salt and pepper. Simmer uncovered 12–15 minutes until sauce lightly coats a spoon. Fold sauce, drained lentils and freshly cooked rice through the cabbage in the bowl.

5. Spread loosely in the dish. Cover and bake 25 minutes, then uncover and bake 5–10 minutes until the center and several other spots reach 165°F (74°C). Rest 5 minutes and serve six portions.

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A short ribbon beats a long leaf

Keep cabbage strips short enough to lift on a spoon. Long tangled strands make serving less comfortable and can drag a disproportionate amount of rice out of the shared dish.

A useful detail

The 110-minute total includes chopping, overlapping lentil, cabbage and rice cooking, the tomato sauce, assembly, up to 35 minutes baking and rest. Rice is cooked fresh during this session and proceeds promptly into the hot bake; do not add an unplanned counter-cooling or overnight-rice step.

Keep it well

Because this contains rice, promptly divide leftovers into shallow portions and refrigerate as quickly as possible, ideally within 1 hour of cooking, at 40°F (4°C) or below; never leave food out beyond 2 hours, or 1 hour above 90°F (32°C). Use within 24 hours of the rice's original cooking, not 24 hours after assembly. Reheat only once to 165°F (74°C) and eat promptly; discard any reheated leftovers. This base method uses fresh rice continuously and does not include pre-chilled rice or a second reheating cycle. Refrigeration is the intended storage method.