

# RED RICE

**R**ED RICE, ALSO KNOWN LOCALLY as purloo, is the low country's rice casserole. A close cousin of jambalaya and paella, its origins reach back to Persian pilafs of almond milk, rice, and dates. This is a dish with endless iterations. You're limited only by your imagination and what's in the refrigerator.

- 3.....SLICES BACON, DICED
- 1 .....CUP HAM, CUBED
- 1/2 .....POUND SMOKED SAUSAGE
- 1/4 .....POUND ITALIAN SAUSAGE LINKS
- PEANUT OIL
- 2 ..... CUPS ONION, DICED (ABOUT 2)
- 1 ..... CUP CELERY, DICED (ABOUT 3 RIBS)
- 1 .....CUP GREEN PEPPER, DICED (ABOUT 1)
- 1 ..... CUP RED PEPPER, DICED (ABOUT 1)
- 1 .....TABLESPOON GARLIC, MINCED (ABOUT 3 CLOVES)
- 1 .....CUP EGGPLANT, PEELED AND DICED (ABOUT 1/2 OF 1 SMALL)
- 2 .....CUPS LONG-GRAIN WHITE RICE
- 1/2 .....CUP RED WINE
- 2 .....CUPS CHICKEN STOCK
- 1 ..... 14.5 OUNCE CAN TOMATO PUREE
- 2 ..... BAY LEAVES
- 2 1/2 .....TEASPOONS SALT

- 1/2 .....TEASPOON DRIED BASIL
- 1/2 .....TEASPOON DRIED THYME
- 1/2 .....TEASPOON FRESHLY GROUND BLACK PEPPER
- 2 .....CUPS OKRA, SLICED
- TABASCO TO TASTE

**Preheat** oven to 375F.

**Cook bacon** in large skillet, over medium-high heat until browned, stirring occasionally, approximately 8 minutes. Set aside and reserve fat. Add the ham, sausage and Italian sausage, and cook, stirring occasionally, until meats are well browned, approximately 10 minutes. Remove from pan and set aside.

**Adding peanut oil** as needed if the skillet looks too dry, cook the onions, celery and peppers, stirring occasionally, until the vegetables are just tender, approximately 5-8 minutes. Add the garlic and continue cooking, stirring, for 2 minutes. Add the eggplant and cook until tender, approximately 5 minutes. Remove the vegetables to a 9x13 or other ovenproof baking dish. Spread evenly on the bottom of the dish.

**Add** 1 tablespoon of peanut oil to the skillet and return to the heat. Add the rice and cook, stirring occasionally, until the rice is fragrant and golden, approximately 2-3 minutes. Cover the vegetable mixture with the toasted rice. Lay the reserved meats on the rice.

**Return the skillet** to medium-high heat. Sauté the okra until lightly browned, add the wine and reduce until almost gone. Add chicken stock, tomato purée, bay leaves, salt, basil, thyme and pepper and bring to a boil. Pour over the vegetable, rice and meat mixture and cover tightly with foil.

**Bake** until the rice is tender, approximately 1-1 1/4 hours. Remove the bay leaves and check the seasoning. Season with Tabasco as desired.

Serves 6