Lamb Biryani

Ingredients

5 T Ginger (chopped)
5 t Kosher Salt
2 c Basmati Rice
3 Onions (thinly sliced)
1/4 t Cayenne
1 t Ground Turmeric
2 T Unsalted Butter
4 Cardamom Pods
2 Cinnamon Sticks
2 c Plain Yogurt
1/2 c Mint Leaves (chopped)
2 lb Leg of Lamb (bonesless, cut into 1-inch cubes)
8 clv Garlic (chopped)
0 ds Ground Black Pepper
5 T Olive Oil
30 oz Tomato Sauce
1 T Paprika
1 t Garam Masala
2 t Cumin Seeds
2 Bay Leaves
1/2 t Saffron Threads
1 Cucumber (peeled and chopped)
1/2 t Ground Cumin

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Instructions

1.Put the chopped ginger and 7 cloves of garlic into the bowl of a food processor and pulse a couple of times. Scrape down the sides. Add 3-4 tablespoons of water. Pulse until you get a paste, scraping down the sides of the bowl as needed. In a medium sized bowl mix the lamb with the garlic-ginger paste, 1/2 salt, and dash of pepper. Cover and refrigerate for a half hour or overnight.
2.Put rice in a large bowl. Fill the bowl halfway with cold water. Swish rice around for a few seconds and pour off the cloudy water. Repeat 3 or 4 times, until the water is fairly clear. Cover rice with cold water by 2 inches and set it aside to soften for an hour. Drain.
3.To start the sauce, in a large heavy pot, heat 3 tablespoons oil over medium high heat. Add the two onions and cook, stirring occasionally, until they are nicely browned and caramelized - about 15 minutes. Regulate the heat so they don't burn. Sprinkle them with a pinch of salt and a few grinds of pepper. Transfer them to a large plate or bowl and set aside. In a small bowl mix tomato sauce, cayenne, paprika, 2 teaspoons salt, turmeric and garam masala. Set aside.
4.In the used pot heat 2 tablespoons oil over medium high heat. Add half the lamb

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with its garlic-ginger coating, and cook for about 5 minutes, tossing occasionally, until the pieces are browned on all sides. Transfer to the plate with the onions. Brown the rest of the lamb, adding more oil, if necessary. Once the second batch of lamb is browned, return the other lamb and the onions back to the pot.
5.Pour in the sauce mix. Stir, scraping the bottom of the pot with a wooden spoon to release the browned bits of lamb into the sauce. Bring to a simmer. Cover and cook for 25-30 minutes, until the lamb is nice and tender. Remove from the heat.
6.While the lamb is simmering, heat 2 tablespoons of butter in a medium sized saucepan. Add the cumin seeds, cardamom pods, bay leaves, and cinnamon sticks. Cook until they sizzle a bit and you can smell the cumin toasting - about 30 seconds. Add the one onion and cook, stirring frequently, for 3-4 minutes, until it starts to brown. Add the saffron and cook stirring, for about 30 seconds, until the saffron releases its color and aroma. Add the drained rice and toss to coat.
7.Pour in 2 cups cold water and 2 teaspoons salt. Stir to combine. Bring to a boil. Lower to a simmer and cook for 5-6 minutes, uncovered - until all the water has evaporated. Remove from the heat.

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8.Preheat the oven to 350F. In a 13x9 casserole dish spread half the lamb curry in the bottom of the dish. Cover with half the rice. Repeat the layers. Cover the casserole with foil. Bake for 35-40 minutes. Let casserole sit for 10 minutes, remove bay leaves, cinnamon sticks, and cardamom pods before serving.
9.To make raita, combine yogurt, cucumber, mint, 1 garlic, ground cumin, and 1/2 teaspoon salt. Cover and refrigerate until needed. Serve with casserole.