



One-pot West African Perfectly "Perloo" Rice

By Dylan Sabuco

Prep Time 10 / **Cook Time** 25 / **Serves** 4 - 6

Fun-Da-Mentals Kitchen Skills

measure: to calculate the specific amount of an ingredient required using a measuring tool (like measuring cups or spoons).

chop: to cut something into small, rough pieces using a blade.

pour: to cause liquid, granules, or powder to stream from one container into another.

sauté: to cook or brown food in a pan containing a small quantity of butter, oil, or other fat.

simmer: to cook a food gently, usually in a liquid, until softened.

Equipment

- ☐ Large pot with lid
- ☐ Medium mixing bowl
- ☐ Cutting board
- ☐ Kid-safe knife
- ☐ Measuring spoons
- ☐ Measuring cups
- ☐ Wooden spoon

Ingredients

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- ☐ 1/2 yellow onion
- ☐ 2 celery stalks

- ☐ 1 large carrot
- ☐ 1 bell pepper (red, yellow, or orange)
- ☐ 2 garlic cloves
- ☐ 1 T vegetable oil **
- ☐ 1 C rice (arborio is best; jasmine or basmati are also fine)
- ☐ 1 tsp salt + more if needed
- ☐ 1/2 tsp ground black pepper + more if needed
- ☐ 2 tsp Old Bay Seasoning + more if needed ** (for NIGHTSHADE ALLERGY sub 1 tsp garlic powder + 1 tsp onion powder + 1/2 tsp cumin)**
- ☐ 2 C water + 1/4 C more if needed
- ☐ 2 C frozen sliced okra

Food Allergen Substitutions

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Nightshade: For 2 tsp Old Bay Seasoning, substitute 1 tsp garlic powder + 1 tsp onion powder + 1/2 tsp cumin.

Soy: Substitute canola oil or other nut-free oil for vegetable oil.

Instructions

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intro

In the Lowcountry, coastal areas of South Carolina and Georgia, "perloo" is a rice dish made with that region's abundant shrimp and other shellfish. Perloo is very similar to jambalaya. Both recipes start with a base of rice simmered with tomato, bell pepper, celery, garlic, and onion. Perloo includes shrimp, crab, and crawfish, and jambalaya includes pork and chicken. This Sticky Fingers Cooking® version will add a bit of West African flavor with the addition of okra instead of seafood or poultry.

dice + sauté

Start by dicing **1/2 yellow onion**, **2 celery stalks**, and **1 bell pepper** into small pieces. Grate or dice **1 carrot**. Then, mince **2 garlic cloves**. Scrape everything that you chopped into a medium-sized bowl. Measure and pour **1 tablespoon of vegetable oil** into a large pot over medium-high heat. Pour in the chopped vegetables and sauté for 5 minutes, stirring frequently.

measure + pour + count

Then, measure and add **1 cup rice**, **1 teaspoon salt**, **1/2 teaspoon black pepper**, and **2 teaspoons Old Bay Seasoning**. Sauté the rice, vegetables, and seasoning for another 5 minutes. While you stir, practice counting to 10 in the Ghanaian Twi (Akan) language: 1 baako (bah-ko), 2 mmienu (mmeeh-new), 3 mmiensa (mee-en-suh), 4 enan (eh-nine), 5 enum (eh-noom), 6 nsia (nn-see-uh), 7 nson (nn-sohn), 8 nwɔtwe (nn-watch-eh), 9 nkron (nn-krohn), 10 edu (eh-doo).

superstar food spotlight

Okra is a green, pod-like vegetable that is native to Africa. Some countries call them lady fingers because of their long, slender appearance. Okra contains a substantial amount of fiber, antioxidants, minerals, and vitamins, which all work together to promote digestion and heart health. Cooking with okra can be tricky, though. If you don't soak them in vinegar first, or you cook them too long or damage the pod, your dish will have a slimy texture.

stir + simmer

Reduce the heat to low. Then, measure **2 cups of water** and add that to the pot. Cover and cook for 20 minutes, stirring every 3 to 4 minutes. In the last 5 minutes of cooking, add **2 cups of frozen okra**. Stir it in and put the lid back on the pot.

season + serve

Remove the lid from the pot and taste the perloo. If you would like to add any more seasoning, you can add a few more pinches of salt, black pepper, or Old Bay Seasoning. Make sure to check for doneness. The rice should be fluffy and soft. If it is hard or crunchy, add **1/4 cup more water** and cook for 5 more minutes. Once your perloo tastes perfect, serve it alongside **Crispy Okra Corn Cakes**. Bon appétit!

Featured Ingredient: Okra!

Hi! I'm Okra!

"You may not be familiar with me yet, but I'm a popular ingredient in the cuisines of the southern US, especially gumbo. I can be a bit slimy, especially if I get too moist—wouldn't you if it was really humid?! Cooking me with something acidic, like tomato and vinegar helps. I'm often referred to as a "lady's finger" because of my shape!"

History

Okra is believed to have originated in Africa, and its name is derived from an African language! Egyptians first cultivated the plant, and it spread through North Africa, the Middle East, Europe, and Asia. Okra first came to the United States in the early 1700s with the slave trade. Okra is considered the "world traveler" of vegetables! That's because it's used in recipes and dishes

around the world.

Southern soldiers used to drink a coffee substitute made from dried and ground okra seeds during the Civil War.

Anatomy

An okra plant can grow as tall as 6½ feet high! They produce edible pods that are long and thin and come to a point at the end. Their shape gave them the nickname “ladies’ fingers.” They look more like witches’ fingers!

If you cut a cross-section of an okra pod, you’ll see that the seeds are arranged in a pattern that looks like a flower. Because it has seeds, okra is technically a fruit! But in the kitchen, it is considered a vegetable.

Okra comes in two varieties: red and green! When you cook red okra, it turns green.

Okra plants produce beautiful white flowers with dark purple centers.

How to Pick, Buy, & Eat

Okra thrives in warm, temperate weather and can tolerate high heat and drought.

The parts of the okra plant you can eat are its green pods, seeds, and leaves!

Okra can be pickled, canned, stewed, grilled, fried, pan-seared, and roasted.

Okra contains soluble fiber, which, when cooked, results in a gelatinous goo that cooks use to thicken dishes.

Okra seeds are pressed and processed into oil used for cooking.

Old or mature okra is used to make paper and rope!

When buying fresh okra, choose medium-small pods as they’re more tender and less stringy.

Okra can be steeped in water overnight to make a delicious tea!

Don’t wash your okra until just before you’re ready to cook it, or you might end up with a gooey mess!

Nutrition

Fiber! Okra has lots of fiber to help keep our intestines clean and digestion running smoothly!

B-Vitamins! B vitamins help the body use the food we’ve eaten for energy!

Antioxidants! Okra has high levels of these nutrients that support our immune system, keep us from getting sick, help us stay strong, and help us grow!