



## ANSON MILLS

### **Charleston Crisp-Crusted Crab Pilau**

#### **Yield**

4 to 6 portions

#### **Time**

About 45 minutes to prep, plus 20 minutes to cook

#### **Cooking Remarks**

If you can locate cooked crab legs at a reasonable price, you'll be able to enhance the flavor of the pilau by making crab-fortified fish stock. Hack 1 pound of cooked crab legs into rough 4-inch pieces and put them into a large saucepan. Pour in 20 ounces (2 $\frac{1}{4}$  cups) of Aromatic Fish Stock and 16 ounces (2 cups) of spring or filtered water and bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Cover partially, turn down the heat to medium-low, and simmer for 1 hour. Strain the liquid. You should have 14 ounces (1 $\frac{3}{4}$  cups) of crab-fortified stock; if you have more, return the liquid to the saucepan and simmer until reduced to the correct amount.

There are both high and low heats in this recipe. Each is important to the recipe's success.

For the over/under cooking (stovetop to oven) we cannot fault Le Creuset's 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ -quart cast-iron braiser. It can take the punishment of high heat and still clean up to a high polish.

#### **Equipment Mise en Place**

For this recipe, you will need a medium bowl, a 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ -quart enameled cast-iron braiser (see Cooking Remarks), a small saucepan, a large fine-mesh strainer, a heavy-bottomed medium saucepan, a large skillet, a heatproof rubber spatula, two oven mitts, a small offset spatula, and a rimless platter for serving.

#### **Ingredients**

1 pound fresh lump crab meat  
2 tablespoons juice from 1 juicy lemon  
14 ounces (1 $\frac{3}{4}$  cups) Aromatic Fish Stock or crab-fortified fish stock (see Cooking Remarks)  
10.5 ounces (1 $\frac{1}{2}$  cups) Anson Mills Carolina Gold Rice  
2 ounces (4 tablespoons) unsalted European-style butter  
2 Turkish bay leaves  
1 $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoons finely grated lemon zest  
0.5 ounces (1 tablespoon) Pernod  
Fine sea salt  
2.5 ounces ( $\frac{1}{2}$  cup) minced shallots (about 4 medium)  
3.5 ounces ( $\frac{3}{4}$  cup) minced celery (about 4 ribs)  
1 (5-ounce) Italian sweet red pepper, seeded minced (3 ounces or  $\frac{2}{3}$  cup packed)  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon red pepper flakes  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon curry powder

2 ounces (1/4 cup) Sercial Madeira  
Freshly ground black pepper  
Fresh chervil or parsley sprigs to garnish

### **Directions**

- 1.** Turn the crabmeat into a medium bowl; if there is excess liquid, pour it off and discard. Sprinkle the crabmeat with the lemon juice, toss to combine, and break any large pieces in half using two forks. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate until ready to use.
- 2.** Adjust the oven rack to the middle position; place a 1½-quart enameled cast-iron braiser on the rack and set the lid next to it. Heat the oven to 450 degrees. Put the stock into a small saucepan, cover, and warm over low heat. In a large fine-mesh strainer, rinse the rice under cool water until the water runs clear. Shake the strainer to remove excess water and let the grains dry for a few minutes.
- 3.** In a heavy-bottomed medium saucepan, warm 1 ounce (2 tablespoons) of the butter over medium heat. Add the rice and stir the grains until well coated with fat. Cook, stirring frequently, until the rice is opaque, about 5 minutes. Add the hot stock, bay leaves, lemon zest, Pernod, and ½ teaspoon of salt; stir to combine. Increase the heat to medium-high and bring to a simmer, and then decrease the heat to medium-low, cover the pan, and cook for 8 minutes, until the rice has absorbed the liquid. Do not open the lid during this time! Remove the pan from the heat and let stand for 1 minute.
- 4.** While the rice is cooking, in a large skillet, warm 0.5 ounce (1 tablespoon) of the butter over medium heat. Add the shallots, celery, and ¼ teaspoon of salt and cook, stirring frequently, until the vegetables are softened and fragrant, 3 to 5 minutes; do not allow them to color. Add the sweet pepper, red pepper flakes, and curry powder and sauté until the pepper is tender, about 2 minutes. Add the Madeira and simmer until it is reduced to a glaze, 1 to 2 minutes. Turn the crabmeat into the aromatics and carefully fold with a heatproof rubber spatula until the crabmeat is warmed through. Now turn the hot rice into the skillet and fold until well combined. Taste for seasoning, adding additional salt if needed and seasoning to taste with black pepper.
- 5.** With you hands protected by oven mitts, quickly pull the hot braiser out of the oven and set it on a burner at medium heat if your stove is powerful or medium-high if it is timid. Drop the remaining 0.5 ounce (1 tablespoon) of butter into the pan and swirl to coat the sides and bottom; the butter will sputter and brown slightly. Spoon the rice mixture into the pan without delay, mounding it slightly in the middle, and then press down and smooth the surface with a small offset spatula; this process should take no more than 1 or 2 minutes. Cover with the hot lid and slide the braiser into the oven. Bake for 10 minutes, until the rice is tender and the bottom of the pilau is browned and crisp.
- 6.** Remove the braiser from the oven, uncover, and allow to stand for a couple of minutes. Invert a rimless platter over the pan; holding the two together with oven-mitted hands, invert the pilau onto the platter, and then carefully lift off the pan. Garnish with chervil or parsley sprigs and serve.