

**A HOUSE IN THE LEBANESE MOUNTAINS: Recipes & Stories from Beit Trad**  
by Sarah Trad

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*Excerpted from A House in the Lebanese Mountains, by Sarah Trad*

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*Yakhnet Bazella w Rezz*

**GREEN PEAS & CARROTS**

This simple but flavorful stew appears very regularly in Lebanese households because it mainly uses common pantry ingredients. While Lebanese stews usually feature some type of meat, the one we make at Beit Trad is vegetarian.

**SERVES 4-6**

1 onion  
6 garlic cloves  
1 bunch coriander or cilantro, about 1 oz  
¼ cup + 2 tablespoons olive oil  
3 tablespoons tomato paste  
14 oz canned chopped tomatoes  
1 lb 2 oz mix of frozen peas and carrots  
1 teaspoon fine sea salt  
½ teaspoon white pepper

TO SERVE:

Vermicelli rice (recipe below)

**TO PREPARE THE STEW BASE:**

Finely chop 1 onion. Peel and finely chop or grate 6 garlic cloves, and finely chop 1 bunch coriander or cilantro.

Heat ¼ cup + 2 tablespoons olive oil in a large pot over medium heat. Add the chopped onion to the hot oil and sauté for about 5 minutes, or until translucent and slightly golden.

Add the chopped garlic and coriander or cilantro, stirring well, and sauté for an additional 2 minutes.

Stir in 3 tablespoons tomato paste and cook, stirring, for a further 2 minutes, until the tomato paste is well combined and begins to deepen in color.

Add 14 oz canned chopped tomatoes and stir thoroughly to combine. Cook for a few minutes, until the tomatoes start breaking down slightly.

### **TO BUILD THE STEW**

Pour in 3 cups water and bring the mixture to a boil. Add mixed frozen peas and carrots, then return to a boil.

Reduce the heat to a simmer, then cover and leave to simmer gently for 20 minutes.

Adjust the lid so that it is slightly ajar, allowing some steam to escape, and simmer for another 15 minutes.

### **TO FINISH THE STEW**

Remove the lid completely. Simmer over medium-low heat for a further 20 minutes, to help reduce the sauce to a thicker consistency.

Finally, stir in 1 teaspoon fine sea salt and ½ teaspoon white pepper. Taste and adjust the seasoning as needed.

### **TO SERVE**

Enjoy warm, with vermicelli rice. Like all stews, this tastes even better the next day.

*Rezz b sha'riyeh*

### **VERMICELLI RICE**

A lot of people are intimidated by cooking rice, fearing it will end up gluggy, but if you follow our steps, it will be the easiest thing you can make at home.

The addition of vermicelli is typically Lebanese. In Lebanese homes, the toasted vermicelli is usually added in with the rice as it simmers away, so it ends up cooked like pasta. But at Beit Trad, inspired by my friend Maroun Salloum, we toast the vermicelli and scatter it over the cooked rice as a garnish just before serving, so it stays crispy.

### **SERVES 6 AS A SIDE**

1 cup basmati rice  
3 tablespoons neutral-flavored oil (such as canola)  
1 oz vermicelli  
½ teaspoon fine sea salt

### **TO RINSE THE RICE:**

Place 1 cup basmati rice in a fine-meshed sieve and rinse under cold running water, swirling vigorously, until the water runs clear. Drain well.

### **TO TOAST THE VERMICELLI:**

While the rice is draining, line a plate with paper towels.

In a non-stick pot with a lid, warm 2 tablespoons of the neutral oil over medium-low heat. Add 1 oz vermicelli and stir constantly for about 5 minutes, until the vermicelli is lightly golden brown.

Remove the toasted vermicelli using a slotted spoon and place on the paper towels to dry and crisp up.

**TO COOK THE RICE:**

Add the remaining 1 tablespoon neutral oil to the pot. Once hot, add the drained rice, stirring to coat each grain. Lightly toast for about 2 minutes, stirring often.

Pour in 1  $\frac{1}{4}$  cups water and add  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon fine sea salt. Increase the heat to high and bring to a simmer. Put the lid on and reduce the heat to very low. Cook for 17 minutes without opening the lid.

After 17 minutes, check the rice. If there is still any water left, cover and cook for a few more minutes. If not, turn off the heat, cover again, and let the rice steam for 10 minutes.

**TO SERVE:**

Fluff the rice with a fork to avoid breaking the grains.

Transfer the cooked rice to a serving dish and serve warm, sprinkled with the crispy vermicelli for added texture and flavor.