

O

is for Optical

Optics studies the behaviour of light and its interactions with matter.

An optical lens bends light waves to form circular luminous projections, designed to reflect a true likeness of its object of study. They have the power to focus and distort what passes through them, writing geometric patterns onto flat two dimensional surfaces.

Optical flaws in the system are designated as *aberrations*.

“I, the mechanical eye will show you the world as only I can see it.” - Dziga Vertov

In the *Scopic Age*, optics enable understanding and optical media enhance dimensions of reality.

No territory seems off limits to its omniscient power of observation, travelling freely, even into the invisible:

“It is through the camera that we first discover the optical unconscious” - Walter Benjamin

The lens may be a tool for understanding and also a delimitation of inquiry.

As visual prosthesis, it both aids and restricts our view of the world.

The oldest known lens, the Nimrod Lens, is a 3000 year old rock crystal, unearthed in an Assyrian palace.

It may have been used as a magnifying device, or a burning glass to start fires. In that same regions, the oldest pulse crop was also grown: the lentil, indigenous to Western and Central Asia.

Shaped like the lentil, the word lens is derived from its lenticular shape, as in the French “lentille”.

The black lentil, or beluga lentil holds its lenticular shape nicely once cooked, its dark black colour derived from its absorption of light waves.

Onions and garlic are fried in olive oil.
Add thyme, coarse salt, black pepper, red wine
Add liquid and allow to simmer on low heat
Finish with butter and cream
Serve and enjoy

Black Lentils

Heat large sauce pan or pot. Personal preference is for cast iron enamelled pot.

Pour in a generous amount of good quality, high-heat olive oil.

Fry several cloves chopped garlic and one sliced onion.

Slowly add fresh thyme, black pepper, coarse sea salt, chilli pepper.

Leave on low to medium heat for 15 mins, stirring occasionally.

Rinse black lentils in cold water and add to pot.

Stir in with garlic and onions, adding a generous splash of red or white wine.

Add water, and if available, some vegetable stock (2:1 liquid to lentil ratio).

Allow to simmer on low heat for about 30 minutes.

Add fresh butter and cream.

Turn heat off, allow to sit, and serve.



W

is for White

White Rice Flour Wrappers with Savoury Black Rice, topped with Coconut Cream.

White grains are bleached whole grains, their dark husks removed, leaving the less nutritious, pale starch - the mythology of aesthetic purity washing off the rich depth of earthy sustenance.

Wrapped within translucent white rice flour skins is Black Rice, known as Emperor's Rice, reserved for the Emperor alone in Ancient China. All others caught eating this royal grain were summarily executed. Whether its rich, nutritional value was recognized, or if it was simply due to its rarity, it remained the most prized of all rices.

Black Rice anchors the dish with its spicy, earthy flavours. The pale, outer skin attempts, but cannot hide the dark interior. Topped with Coconut Cream, a sweet, runny blanket envelops it, as it slowly slips away.

Here, black and white are represented in their contrast and interconnections - the oscillations of figure and ground. Whiteness is only revealed when set against black. Brought together in this recipe, they blend in colour, tone and flavour.

Recipe:

Black rice is rinsed in cold water and cooked in 2:1 ratio water to rice.

Bring water and rice to boil, reduce heat to low and simmer for 20-25 minutes.

Rice may be flavoured in different ways. For this dish, we have created a spicy, savoury mix to add to the rice. Chopped garlic and onion is fried in coconut oil, then curry paste is added, as well as fresh coriander, a little sesame oil, tamari sauce, mirin sauce and rice vinegar. This sauce is added to the rice once cooked.

In a small pot, heat a can of Coconut Cream. Bring to boil and turn off heat.

Rice flour wrappers are prepared by placing each wrapper in a wet towel for a few minutes until soft.

Once rice has cooled a little, form a small oblong ball, place in wrapper and wrap!

Place wrapped rice in dish and top with coconut cream. Enjoy!

