

# Rice: The Healthy Budget Stretcher!



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# Use It or Lose It...Rice

Rice is a versatile, economical food for family meals. It is a good source of energy, and can supply vitamins and minerals to the diet. It is generally classified as a grain, but in family meals it can be used as:

1. A cereal
2. A vegetable
  - a. As a substitute for potatoes
  - b. As a base for meat
  - c. In soups
3. A dessert
  - a. Puddings
  - b. Custards

Rice has been commonly known and used since ancient times. It has been and still is a medium of exchange in some countries. The custom of throwing rice at weddings is a survival of the ancient Chinese religious belief that rice is the symbol of fertility. It is easy to store, takes little storage space, and has no waste since it is completely edible. Rice has been grown in America since 1668, and technological developments have kept pace providing the kind of rice needed for any purpose.

Even though there are 7,000 varieties of rice produced in the world, the consumer needs to be aware that generally there are only three different lengths of rice grain and five different kinds.

## **Lengths**

**Long grain** rice is distinguished because its length is four to five times its width. The grains are clear and translucent. The grains remain distinct and separate after cooking.

**Medium grain** rice is about three times as long as its width. This type is less expensive than long grain rice. This is because it requires a shorter growing season and produces a higher yield per acre. It is also easier to mill than the long grained variety.

**Short grain** rice is only one and one-half to two times as long as it is wide. It is generally the least expensive of the three lengths.

## **Kinds**

With five different kinds of rice to select from, it is important to be able to distinguish between the different varieties available.

**Brown rice:** the whole, unpolished grain of rice with only the outer fibrous, inedible hull removed. Brown rice requires more water and longer cooking time than white rice. It has a delightful, chewy texture, with a distinctive nut-like flavor. Brown rice shelf life is very short. It is not a good item for long term storage. Store brown rice for only six months.

**Regular milled white rice:** rice from which hulls, germ, outer bran layers and most of the inner bran are removed in the milling process. The grains are bland in flavor and are fluffy and distinct when cooking directions are followed.

**Parboiled rice:** sometimes called processed or converted rice, it has been treated to keep some of the natural vitamins and minerals the whole grain contains. It has been cooked before milling by a special steam pressure process. It requires longer cooking time than regular milled white rice, but after cooking, the grains are fluffy, separate and plump.

**Pre-cooked or instant rice:** quick type that is completely cooked. It needs only to stand in boiling water to be ready for serving.

**Fortified or enriched rice:** This product is a combination of highly fortified rice with ordinary milled rice. A coating of vitamins and minerals—thiamin, niacin, iron, and sometimes riboflavin—is used to fortify rice. This coating adheres to the rice and does not dissolve with ordinary washing or cooking.

**Wild rice:** Wild rice is not rice at all, but the seed of a wild water grass found around the Great Lakes region. It is much more expensive than the types of rice described above. Many Americans have discovered this rice and developed a taste for it. The demand for it is almost greater than the supply.

### **Preparation**

Some rules are a must in preparing rice. Due to the fact that the B vitamins are added to rice in the form of powder, much of the valuable nutrients are lost if the product is not handled properly.

- A. Do not wash rice before cooking or rinse it after cooking. Rice is one of the most sanitary foods. Rice grown and milled in the U.S. is clean. Nutrients on the surface of the rice are washed away if it is washed or rinsed before cooking.
- B. Do not use too much water when cooking rice. Any water drained off means wasted food value. Too much water makes soggy rice. Too little water results in a dry product.
- C. Do not stir rice after it comes to a boil. This breaks up the grains and makes the rice gummy.
- D. Do not leave rice in a pan in which it is cooked for more than 5-10 minutes or the cooked rice will pack.

Taken from: Food Storage Cooking School- Low and Hendricks, USU Extension, Salt Lake County, 1/99. Copies may be made for individual and non-profit use.

# Rice Recipes

## To cook white rice:

One cup of uncooked rice equals 3 cups of cooked rice, or four servings. Combine:

- 1 cup uncooked rice
- 1 tsp. salt
- 2 cups boiling water



Bring water and salt to boil. Add rice; stir once or twice and return to boil. Reduce heat; cover and simmer. Cook about 20 minutes without removing lid or stirring, or until liquid is absorbed and rice is tender. If rice is not quite tender or liquid is not absorbed, replace lid and cook 2 to 4 minutes longer. Fluff with fork.

## Tips for Using Rice:

Cook rice in beef or chicken broth instead of water.

Mix cooked rice with a variety of things - sliced mushrooms, sautéed onions, crumbled pieces of bacon, slivered almonds or grated cheese.

## *Oriental Fried Rice*

- |                            |                          |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| 2 Tbsp. canola oil         | 2 Tbsp. soy sauce        |
| 3 eggs, beaten             | 1 tsp. seasoning salt    |
| Dash of salt               | 1 cup ham, diced         |
| 4 cups cooked rice, cooled | 1 cup green onion, diced |
| 1 cup wheat berries        |                          |

In large skillet or wok, heat oil. Pour in eggs and salt and cook as an omelet; remove to cutting board and chop. Heat more oil. Pour in rice, wheat, soy sauce, and seasoning salt. Sauté until hot. Remove. Do not add more oil. Put ham and onion into pan and sauté until hot. Combine all ingredients. Stir and cook until hot.

## *Chicken-Rice Bake*

- |                                       |                                   |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1 (10 oz.) can cream of mushroom soup | 1 cup regular rice                |
| 1 cup milk                            | 3 lb. chicken, cut up and skinned |
| 1 envelope onion soup mix             | Paprika or seasoning salt         |
| 1 (3 oz.) can chopped mushrooms       |                                   |

In bowl, stir together mushroom soup, milk, dry onion soup mix, and undrained mushrooms. Reserve 1/2 cup of the soup mixture and set aside. Stir uncooked rice into remaining soup mixture. Turn rice mixture into 9x13 inch baking dish. Arrange chicken pieces on top. Pour reserved soup mixture over chicken, sprinkle chicken pieces with paprika. Cover tightly with foil. Bake at 375° F. until rice is tender (approx. 1½ hours) or 250° F. for 3 hours.

## ***Lion House Rice Pudding***

2 cups cooked rice

2 cups milk

1 large can evaporated milk

½ cup raisins

2 Tbsp. cornstarch

¼ tsp. salt

½ cup plus 2 Tbsp. sugar

2 eggs, slightly beaten

⅛ tsp. nutmeg

⅛ tsp. cinnamon

1 tsp. vanilla

In heavy 2 or 3-quart saucepan, combine cornstarch, salt, and sugar and blend well. Add milks, stirring constantly over medium heat until thick and smooth. Add rice; reheat to a full boil. Remove from heat. Pour a little of the hot mixture into beaten eggs while stirring rapidly. Return egg mixture to hot milk and rice and stir until thickened. Remove from heat. Stir in raisins, spices, and vanilla. Chill. Makes eight ½-cup servings.



## ***Wild Rice Pilaf***

2 Tbsp. canola or olive oil

1 cup uncooked long-grain wild rice

¼ cup finely chopped onions

⅓ cup finely chopped celery

3 cups hot chicken broth

2 Tbsp. chopped parsley

¼ cup slivered almonds

Heat oil in frying pan over medium heat. Add rice, onions, and celery; stir and cook until slightly brown. Add chicken broth. Reduce heat to low; cover and simmer until moisture has been absorbed and rice is tender, about 15 to 20 minutes. Just before serving, add parsley and almonds, toss lightly. Makes 8 servings.

## ***South-of-the-Border Lasagna***

1½ cups sour cream

1½ cups salsa

Vegetable cooking spray

6 cups cooked rice, divided

1 (15-16 oz) can black beans, drained and rinsed

3 cups shredded cheddar cheese, divided

2 cups crushed tortilla chips

In a medium bowl, combine sour cream and salsa, set aside. Coat 13x9 inch baking dish with cooking spray. Layer bottom of dish with 3 cups rice. Top with half of sour cream mixture, then with 1½ cup cheese. Add layer of beans, remaining rice, and remaining sour cream mixture. Bake covered at 350° F. for 15 minutes; remove from oven. Mix remaining cheese with chips and sprinkle on lasagna. Return to oven and bake for 5 minutes, or until cheese melts.

## ***Porcupine Meatballs***

1½ pounds lean ground beef  
1 cup cooked, cooled rice  
½ cup wheat berries  
1 egg, slightly beaten  
¼ cup finely chopped onion

1 (8 oz.) can tomato sauce  
½ cup dry bread crumbs  
¼ tsp. chili powder  
½ tsp. seasoning salt  
¼ tsp. black pepper

Combine all ingredients; mix well. Form into balls, each about 2 inches in diameter. Place in casserole dish. Cover with sauce (below). Bake at 350° F. for about 45 minutes. Makes 6 to 8 servings, 2 large meatballs each.

### **Sauce:**

½ cup brown sugar  
½ cup bottled barbecue sauce  
½ cup catsup  
1 (10½ oz.) can tomato soup

1 tsp. Worcestershire sauce  
½ tsp. seasoning salt  
½ tsp. chili powder

Combine all ingredients and blend thoroughly. Heat and simmer about 3 minutes. Pour over meatballs.

## ***Stuffed Green Peppers***

1½ pounds lean ground beef  
1 cup cooked, cooled rice  
½ cup whole wheat berries  
1 egg, slightly beaten  
¼ cup finely chopped onion  
1 (8 oz.) can tomato sauce  
½ cup dry bread crumbs

½ cup oatmeal  
¼ tsp. chili powder  
½ tsp. seasoning salt  
¼ tsp. black pepper  
4 green peppers cut in half lengthwise,  
remove insides.

Combine all ingredients except green peppers; mix well. Place green peppers in casserole dish. Fill with meat mixture. Cover with sauce for porcupine meatballs if desired. Bake at 350° F. for about 1 hour.

## ***Creole Beef and Rice***

¼ pound country sausage  
¼ pound ground beef  
1 cup celery, chopped  
1 onion, chopped  
About 2 tsp. Cajun seasoning, to taste

1½ cups uncooked white rice  
2 (14 oz.) cans stewed tomatoes  
1 (12 oz.) vegetable juice, spicy  
1½ cup frozen okra (optional)

Brown meat with onion, celery, and Cajun seasonings, stir frequently. Add remaining ingredients. Add 1 cup water. Bring to a boil, cover, reduce heat and simmer 20 - 30 minutes.

## Got Leftover Rice?

The next time you're cooking rice, save time in the kitchen by preparing more rice than you need for a single meal. Cooked rice is the quintessential fast food, quickly transforming simple ingredients into puddings, salads, skillet meals, or hearty soups in relatively no time at all.

Cooked rice can be kept in the refrigerator for up to six days or in the freezer for up to six months. To freeze, simply place rice in freezer bags and store flat, keeping storage space to a minimum. A quick zap in the microwave, with a couple of tablespoons of water, and you're halfway to dinner or dessert!

1. **Fried Rice:** For best results, fried rice should be prepared with chilled cooked rice (rice that has not been chilled will clump together when fried). Stir-fry rice with seasonal vegetables and leftover chicken or meat. Season with soy sauce and sesame oil. Green onions, scrambled eggs, frozen peas, and grated ginger are good additions to fried rice.
2. **Rice Pudding:** Simmer cooked rice in milk that has been sweetened or half and half. Stir in dried fruit (raisins, apricots, cranberries), vanilla extract, and ground cinnamon for a warm, comforting dessert. Chocolate lovers can skip the fruit and cinnamon, substituting chocolate chips instead.
3. **Rice Wraps:** Take a tip from the local fast food taco chains. Fill tortillas with rice, salsa, cooked chicken or beef strips, pinto beans, grated cheddar cheese and a dollop of sour cream.
4. **Soup:** Adding rice to cream or broth-based soups takes it from first course to main dish. For a quick meal, add cooked rice, your favorite vegetables, and canned chicken stock to store-bought roasted chicken.
5. **Stuffed Vegetables:** For a great fall or winter treat, use the following recipe to stuff squash or pumpkins:

### *Dinner in a Pumpkin*

|                              |                                 |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1 cooking pumpkin (3-4 lbs.) | ¾ tsp. salt                     |
| 2 Tbsp. canola oil           | 2 cups cooked rice              |
| 2 Tbsp. margarine, melted    | 2 cans cream of chicken soup    |
| 1 lb. lean ground beef       | 1 can sliced mushrooms, drained |
| ½ cup celery, chopped        | ¼ cup soy sauce                 |
| ½ cup onion, chopped         | 2 Tbsp. packed brown sugar      |
| ¼ cup green pepper, diced    |                                 |

Using sharp knife, cut 3-inch circle around stem of pumpkin. Remove seeds and pulp; discard. Brush inside of pumpkin with margarine. Brush outside of pumpkin with salad oil; placed in center of a greased baking sheet. Bake at 375° F for 30 minutes.

While pumpkin is baking, brown ground beef. Stir in celery, onion, green pepper and salt. Cook over low heat about 10 minutes. Add cooked rice, soup, mushrooms, soy sauce, and brown sugar. Spoon mixture into pumpkin and replace pumpkin top. Bake at 375° F. for about 1 hour until pumpkin is tender.

6. **Hot Cereal:** Nothing is better on a chilly morning than a bowl of warm cooked rice that has been zapped in the microwave with a little milk or cream, drizzled with butter, and sprinkled with cinnamon and sugar. For variety, use brown rice, which has a nutty flavor and crunchy texture. Add fresh fruit, or substitute maple syrup for the cinnamon and sugar.
7. **Salad:** Hot or cold, the beauty of rice salads is simply their simplicity. Toss in your favorite fruits or vegetables, chicken, turkey, tuna or beef, and a fabulous salad dressing and you're good to go!

## **Rice . . . Stir it up!**

For imaginative chefs who love to cook, but don't like following directions, here are 17 fabulous rice recipe "ideas" that take you from ordinary to extraordinary! To hot rice, add:

1. Fresh mushrooms sautéed in butter, thawed frozen petite peas, and Parmesan cheese.
2. Diced tomatoes and fresh or dried basil.
3. Heavy cream or milk, sugar, cinnamon, and browned butter.
4. Sliced green onions, salted cashews, toasted sesame seeds, and rice vinegar.
5. Heavy cream, sliced bananas, chopped pecans, and chocolate chips.
6. Black beans, salsa, lite/fat free sour cream, shredded cheese, and chopped cilantro.
7. Crisp bacon, cheddar cheese, lite/fat free sour cream, and chopped olives.
8. Fresh green beans sautéed in butter, and toasted sliced almonds.
9. Granola, vanilla yogurt, and raisins.
10. Cashews, chopped roasted chicken, and chopped chives.
11. Grilled shrimp, corn, crisp bacon bits, and chopped sun-dried tomatoes in oil.
12. Diced tomatoes, sliced green onions, and shredded Monterey Jack cheese.
13. Zucchini and carrot "matchsticks" sautéed in butter, and Parmesan cheese.
14. Sliced apples sautéed in butter, cinnamon, brown sugar, chopped nuts, and vanilla yogurt.
15. Black beans, minced red onion, chopped bell pepper, chopped cilantro, and vinaigrette.
16. Fresh raspberries or sliced strawberries, heavy cream or milk, vanilla, and sugar.
17. Thawed frozen corn, mild green chiles, and lite/fat free sour cream.