

# Now, You're Cooking with Brown Rice!

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## Lancaster County

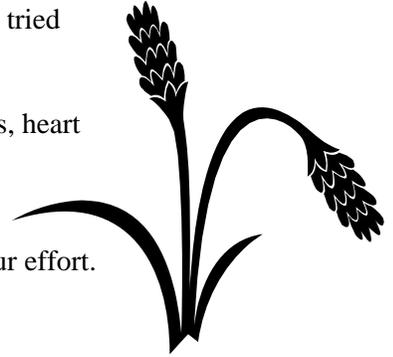
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With almost 2 grams of healthy fiber and just over 100 calories per half cup ... have you tried the nutty flavor of brown rice?

What's more, whole grains — such as brown rice — may help reduce the risk of diabetes, heart disease and certain cancers, and may even contribute to maintaining a healthy weight.

Brown rice takes longer to cook than regular white rice (about 45 minutes vs. 15 or 20 minutes). However, it's easy to cook a larger batch and enjoy more than one meal for your effort.



## Storing Brown Rice

Cooked brown rice can be stored, covered tightly, in a shallow container in the refrigerator for 3 to 5 days or in the freezer for 6 months according to the USA Rice Federation. After cooked rice has cooled in the refrigerator, transfer it to plastic freezer bags in quantities needed for future meals. Label with the date and quantity.

Because of the oil in its bran layer, brown rice has a shorter shelf life than white rice and maintains its quality for about six months. For longer storage, refrigerate or freeze brown rice.

### IMPORTANT! REFRIGERATING COOKED RICE

Promptly refrigerate extra cooked rice in shallow containers as it cools faster in the refrigerator. It's OK to refrigerate foods while they're still warm. Perishable cooked foods, such as rice, shouldn't be left at room temperature longer than TWO hours TOTAL time.

For thicker foods — such as rice, soups, hot puddings, etc. — limit depth of food to 2 inches. Loosely cover the rice. This allows heat to escape and protects from accidental contamination from other foods during cooling. Cover tightly when cooled.

## Preparing Brown Rice

Brown rice may be used instead of white rice in many recipes. It tastes especially good in salads, stuffing, stews and vegetarian dishes. Brown rice is available in three sizes according to the USA Rice Federation

<[www.usarice.com](http://www.usarice.com)>:

- **Long-grain rice:** produces light, dry grains that separate easily.
- **Short-grain rice:** yields fat, almost round grains with a higher starch content than the other two varieties; the grains stick together when cooked.
- **Medium-grain rice:** has a size and characteristics between the other two rice varieties.

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The USA Rice Federation <[www.usarice.com](http://www.usarice.com)> recommends following package directions for preparing brown rice. If no directions are available, they suggest the following method.

## **GENERAL DIRECTIONS FOR PREPARING BROWN RICE**

### **Ingredients**

- 1 cup uncooked brown rice
- 2-1/4 cups liquid (water, broth, juice)
- 1 tablespoon butter or margarine (OPTIONAL)
- 1 teaspoon salt (OPTIONAL)

NOTE: 1 CUP UNCOOKED BROWN RICE YIELDS ABOUT 3 TO 4 CUPS COOKED RICE

### **Directions: Top of Range, Microwave Oven, Rice Cooker**

#### **Top of Range**

1. Combine 1 cup rice, 2-1/4 cups liquid, 1 teaspoon salt (optional), and 1 tablespoon butter or margarine (optional) in 2- to 3-quart saucepan.
2. Heat to boiling; stir once or twice.
3. Reduce heat; cover and simmer. Cook for 45 to 50 minutes. If rice is not quite tender or liquid is not absorbed, replace lid and cook 2 to 4 minutes longer. Fluff with fork.

#### **Microwave Oven**

1. Combine 1 cup rice, 2-1/4 cups liquid, 1 teaspoon salt (optional), and 1 tablespoon butter or margarine (optional) in 2- to 3-quart deep microwave baking dish.
2. Cover and cook on HIGH 5 minutes or until boiling.
3. Reduce setting to MEDIUM (50% power) and cook 30 minutes. Fluff with fork.

#### **Rice Cooker**

The USA Rice Federation recommends following individual manufacturers' directions when using a rice cooker. In general, they advise that "all ingredients are combined using 1/4 to 1/2 cup less liquid than for the top-of-the-range method."

Source: based on information provided by [www.usarice.com](http://www.usarice.com)

## TIPS ON SELECTING A RICE COOKER

If cooking rice seems like too much fuss and an uncertain outcome, consider trying a rice cooker.

A rice cooker features an inner pan that rests above a heating element. Specific ratios of water and rice are added to the cooker. Rice cookers determine when the rice is done by sensing the temperature of the inner pan.

Helpful features include:

- Glass lid to view cooking process
- Hole in lid so steam escapes
- Nonstick pan



Pointers to successfully use a rice cooker include:

- Read the directions that come with your rice cooker to learn how much rice and liquid to use for different types of rice. Check how long rice may be left in the cooker on the "keep warm" setting. Some cookers recommend removing brown rice shortly after it is cooked.
- Be aware when the directions refer to "cups" of rice, they usually refer to the cup or scoop that comes with the cooker. This may be smaller than a typical 8-ounce cup.

Here are some tips the USA Rice Federation offers for making "perfect rice:"

- Keep the lid on the pot while cooking rice to prevent loss of steam.
- Use the correct size of cookware — rice will triple in volume.
- Avoid stirring rice while it is cooking. This releases starch and makes the rice sticky. Another tip, if more separate grains are desired: Sauté rice in a small amount of butter or margarine before adding the liquid.
- Test for doneness at the end of the cooking time. Cook 2 to 4 minutes longer if the rice isn't tender or the liquid isn't absorbed. If the rice is crunchy, it may be necessary to add more liquid before cooking longer.
- At the end of cooking, fluff the rice with a fork. This allows the steam to escape and helps keep the grains separate.

## Reheating Rice for another Meal

Reheated rice tastes comparable to when it was first prepared. The USA Rice Federation gives these recommendations for reheating rice. Also, cooked rice may be tossed directly into soups.

## REHEATING RICE

Add 2 tablespoons of liquid per cup of rice.

- **For Top of Range.** Cover and heat about 5 minutes until heated thoroughly throughout. Use low heat for best results. The amount of time may vary slightly depending on how much you're reheating. Fluff with fork.
- **For Microwave.** Cover and cook on HIGH about 1 minute per cup. Cook frozen rice 2 minutes on HIGH for each cup. Fluff with fork. (Note: Many people prefer reheating their rice in the microwave, according to the USA Rice Federation.)

Source: Based on information provided by [www.usarice.com](http://www.usarice.com)

## Rice Recipes

### MEXICAN SKILLET RICE (6 servings)

- 1 pound lean ground beef or turkey
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 2 tablespoons chili powder
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 3 cups cooked brown rice
- 1 16-ounce can pinto beans, drained
- 2 4-ounce cans diced green chiles
- 1 medium fresh tomato, seeded and chopped (optional)
- Fresh cilantro for garnish (optional)

1. In large skillet over medium-high heat, cook meat until brown, stirring to crumble; drain. Return meat to skillet.
2. Add onion, chili powder, cumin and salt; cook until onion is tender.
3. Stir in rice, beans and chiles; thoroughly heat.
4. Top with tomato and garnish with cilantro if desired. Serve immediately.

**Nutrition Facts per serving:** Calories, 313; Total Fat, 9g; Cholesterol, 29 mg; Sodium, 340 mg; Total Carbohydrate, 43 g; Dietary Fiber, 6 g; Protein, 17 g

**SOURCE:** Recipe courtesy of the USA Rice Federation. For more information about rice: [www.usarice.com](http://www.usarice.com)

### ALICE'S NOTES:

1. If you cry when working with onions, here's why: "The tearjerker in onions is a compound called propanethial-s-oxide, which is released in a vapor when onions are cut" according to Cheryl Forberg, professional chef, registered dietitian and author of *Stop the Clock! Cooking* <[www.cherylforberg.com](http://www.cherylforberg.com)>. "When the vapor comes in contact with the eye, it is converted to a form of sulfuric acid, which produces the stinging sensation and subsequent tears. Cutting onions under water or chilling them before cutting will retard the enzymes that generate the noxious chemicals."

After cutting the onions (and after cutting garlic), one suggestion that may help remove the smell from your hands is to run cool tap water over your hands while rubbing them across a stainless steel utensil, such as the bowl of a stainless steel spoon. If you have been cutting a lot of onions, this may not be as effective.

2. If desired, lower the sodium further by cutting back or omitting the salt, especially if your beans are canned with salt.
  3. When I tried freezing some of this recipe for later use, I was quite pleased with the results. As I was reheating it in the microwave at work, several people commented on how good it smelled! For tips on how to freeze this recipe in plastic freezer bags, visit: [lancaster.unl.edu/food/ciq-freezing-techniques.htm](http://lancaster.unl.edu/food/ciq-freezing-techniques.htm)
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### **HEALTH NUT BROWN RICE** (6 servings)

- 1/3 cup sliced almond
- 1/3 cup sunflower kernels
- 1/3 cup julienned carrots\*
- 1/4 teaspoon red pepper flakes (optional)
- 1 tablespoon margarine
- 3 cups cooked brown rice (cooked in chicken broth)
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley

Cook almonds, sunflower kernels, carrots, and pepper flakes in margarine in large skillet over medium-high heat until almonds are lightly browned. Add rice and parsley; stir until thoroughly heated.

\* Julienne carrots by cutting them into long thin strips.

**SOURCE:** Recipe courtesy of the USA Rice Federation. For more information about rice: [www.usarice.com](http://www.usarice.com)

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### **ORANGE MINT RICE SALAD** (6 servings)

- 3 oranges
- 3 cups cooked rice
- 1/3 cup golden raisins
- 1/3 cup chopped fresh mint leaves
- 1/2 cup chopped walnuts
- Salt and pepper to taste

Peel and segment two oranges; set aside. Squeeze juice from remaining orange; set aside. In a large bowl, combine rice, orange segments, raisins, mint and walnuts. Add orange juice; toss well. Salt and pepper to taste.

**SOURCE:** Recipe courtesy of the USA Rice Federation. For more information about rice: [www.usarice.com](http://www.usarice.com)

#### **ALICE'S NOTES:**

- I used brown rice I had made earlier and refrigerated. For more information on making and storing brown rice, see the related articles at the end of this article.
- Rather than making a special trip to the store, I used regular dark raisins rather than golden raisins. Though golden raisins give a slightly different flavor, I found them a satisfactory substitution. You might also try adding other types of dried fruit, such as dried cherries or cranberries.

- I made 1/3 of this recipe (an amount equal to two servings) and ate the whole thing as a light main dish salad!
  - Try to make this salad at least a half hour before you serve it, to give the flavors time to blend.
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### **GREEK RICE SALAD** (6 to 8 servings)

- 3 cups cooked medium grain brown rice
- 1 cup red grape tomatoes; sliced in half
- 1/3 cup pitted Kalamata olives, sliced
- 1/4 cup Feta vinaigrette dressing (purchase at store)
- Salt and freshly-ground pepper to taste
- Romaine leaves

Combine rice, tomato halves, olives and vinaigrette in a large mixing bowl. Season with salt and pepper. Serve with whole Romaine leaves, which can be used like taco shells to hold filling. Alternatively, arrange Romaine leaves on a platter and place rice mixture on top of greens. Chill.

**SOURCE:** Recipe courtesy of the USA Rice Federation. For more information about rice: [www.usarice.com](http://www.usarice.com)

#### **ALICE'S NOTES:**

For an Italian Rice Salad, you might try substituting an Italian oil/vinegar-type dressing and green olives for the Feta vinaigrette dressing and the Kalamata olives.

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### **BROWN RICE TABBOULEH**

(6 servings)

- 3 cups cooked brown rice
- 3/4 cup chopped cucumber
- 3/4 cup chopped tomato
- 1/2 cup chopped fresh parsley
- 1/4 cup chopped fresh mint leaves
- 1/4 cup sliced green onions
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 1/4 cup lemon juice
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

Combine rice, cucumber, tomato, parsley, mint, green onions, olive oil, lemon juice, salt and pepper in large bowl. Toss well and chill.

**Nutrition Facts:** (per 1/6 of recipe), Calories, 201; Total Fat, 10g; Sodium, 204mg; Total Carbohydrate, 25g; Dietary Fiber, 2g; Protein, 3g.

**SOURCE:** Recipe courtesy of the USA Rice Federation. For more information about rice: [www.usarice.com](http://www.usarice.com)

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## TUTTI FRUTTI RICE PUDDING (4 servings)

Enjoy this healthy, hearty pudding made with fruit, whole-grain rice, skim or low-fat milk, and eggs for under 200 calories per serving!

***IMPORTANT: Read recipe, including Alice's Notes, before starting to prepare pudding.***

- Cooking spray
- 1/2 cup cooked rice
- 1/2 cup (2 oz.) mixed diced dried fruit bits
- 2 eggs
- 3 tablespoons sugar\*
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 cup skim or low-fat (1%) milk
- Ground cinnamon, optional

1. Preheat oven to 350 F with oven rack in the middle.
2. Lightly spray 4 (6-ounce) custard cups with cooking spray and place in a large baking pan. Leave some space around each custard cup.
3. Spoon 2 tablespoons of the rice and 2 tablespoons of the fruit bits into each cup.
4. In medium bowl, beat together eggs, sugar and vanilla until well blended. Stir in milk. Pour over rice and fruit in cups. Sprinkle with cinnamon if desired.
5. Place pan on middle rack in preheated oven.
6. Pour very hot (but not boiling) water into pan to within 1/2 inch of top of custards.
7. Bake until a knife inserted near center comes out clean, about 35 to 45 minutes. (A thermometer inserted at the center reads 160 F when the custards are done.) Remove promptly from hot water.
8. Cool on wire rack 5 to 10 minutes. Serve warm or chilled.

\* For a caramel flavor, use firmly packed brown sugar.

**Nutrition information per serving of 1/4 recipe without cinnamon:** Calories, 164; Protein, 6 gm; Carbohydrates, 29 gm; Total Fat, 3 gm; Cholesterol, 107 mg; Sodium, 67 mg.

**SOURCE:** Adapted slightly from an American Egg Board recipe, courtesy of Mary Torell, Public Information Officer, Nebraska Dept. of Agriculture - Poultry & Egg Division. For more information on cooking with eggs, visit the American Egg Board Web site and the Nebraska Department of Agriculture Poultry and Egg Division Web site: [www.aeb.org](http://www.aeb.org) and [www.nebraskapoultry.org](http://www.nebraskapoultry.org)

### ALICE'S NOTES:

1. If desired, put together your own combination of dried fruits — apricots, cranberries, cherries, raisins, blueberries, etc. Dice so they're all in small pieces.

2. Transfer custard mixture to a 2-cup liquid measuring cup for easy pouring into custard cups.
  3. Start checking custard at the earliest time.
  4. It may be easier to remove the custard dishes from the pan while the pan is still in the oven. Let the water in the pan cool before lifting the pan from the oven.
  5. Some Internet Web sites suggest using a slotted, broad-bladed, metal spatula to help you lift custard dishes from the water until you can get a grip on the dish.
  6. Store custard in the refrigerator and plan to eat within a day or two. Avoid letting custard set at room temperature more than 2 hours, TOTAL time.
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## **RICE STIR'IN'S AND RICE BOWLS**

**STIR'IN'S:** The USA Rice Federation offers several suggestions for quick “stir-in's” to use rice for everything from entrees to side dishes, salads and desserts. Here are some of their suggestions using common kitchen ingredients. Dried cranberries, chopped pecans, sliced green onions, and Parmesan cheese

1. Thawed frozen peas and chopped smoked ham
2. Chopped roasted chicken, toasted sliced almonds, sliced green onions, and orange marmalade
3. Scrambled eggs, chopped Canadian bacon, and chopped chives
4. Orange segments, toasted sliced almonds, and sliced green onions
5. Granola, vanilla yogurt, and golden raisins
6. Butter, lemon zest, and fresh lemon juice
7. Minced garlic and mushrooms sautéed in butter
8. Diced tomatoes, sliced green onions, and shredded Monterey Jack cheese
9. Vanilla ice cream and a dash of cinnamon
10. Scrambled eggs, crumbled sausage, cream cheese cubes, and sliced green onions
11. Yogurt and fresh fruit
12. Zucchini and carrot “matchsticks” sautéed in butter, and Parmesan cheese
13. Sliced apples sautéed in butter, cinnamon, brown sugar, chopped nuts, and vanilla yogurt
14. Thawed frozen corn, mild green chiles, and sour cream

For additional stir-in ideas: [www.usarice.com/news/news\\_detail.cgi/17/1](http://www.usarice.com/news/news_detail.cgi/17/1)

**RICE BOWLS:** Rice bowls are a 3-step easy, inexpensive and delicious way to combine rice with other healthy foods such as vegetables and lean proteins. They offer practical, customized, meals, low in fat and sodium, according to the USA Rice Federation. Rice bowls include the following, sauced or seasoned as you like:

- 1 cup of rice
- 1 cup or more of nutrient-packed vegetables
- 2-3 ounces of lean proteins

For additional fact sheets on rice bowls and other topics, visit [www.usarice.com/consumer/factsheets.html](http://www.usarice.com/consumer/factsheets.html)