

Rice: Simple and Nice



Kia ora koutou,

Rice is a nice cheap food that can be brought to life in many ways. Its ability to soak up flavours and the way it can easily be part of almost any meal makes it a great option at any time of the year. Serve rice with stews, casserole, curries, or use in soups, stir fries, salads or stuffing.

There are many varieties of rice available on West Coast supermarket shelves. Brown and wild rice varieties provide plenty of fibre and nutrients and you need less of them to fill you up. White rice is also a good option as it absorbs flavours nicely.

To cook rice

Brown or wild rice has a longer cooking time and will soak up more water than white rice. There are many ways that you can prepare rice depending on what you have available at home:

1. **Packet (boil in bag) rice.** Boil in water (according to the packet instructions) on the stove until rice is soft enough to chew.
2. **Boil in water.** Use a ratio of *1 part of rice to 2 parts of water (1:2)**. You can also swap in vegetable or chicken stock for more flavour. Bring the water (or stock) to boil then add the rice. Cover with lid and let it simmer on low heat until liquid is reduced and the rice is soft. One cup of white rice will take about 15 – 20 minutes to cook and brown rice will take about 30 minutes.
3. **Microwave.** Put the rice in boiled hot water (using the 1:2 ratio again) in a microwave-safe dish with cover and microwave on high for 6 to 8 minutes depending on the power of your microwave. Check and give the rice a quick taste, cover and cook for additional one minute on high until the rice is the desired texture.
4. If you have a **rice cooker**, use the same magic 1:2 ratio and it will do all the work for you.

*1:2 ratio= 1 cup rice to 2 cups water, 1 ½ cup rice and 3 cups water, 2 cups rice and 4 cups water, and so on.

Food

Rice contains bacteria that can be harmful if not handled correctly. Don't leave cooked or prepared rice to cool slowly at room temperature. Make sure cooked rice is either:

Safety

Eaten immediately, kept hot at above 60°C, or cooled and stored in the fridge until used.

Pumpkin Risotto

- 4 cups water
- 1 stock cube
- 1 tablespoon cooking oil
- 1 onion, diced
- 3 cups pumpkin, diced
- 3 cloves garlic, crushed
- 1 cup medium grain rice
- 1 cup frozen peas
- ½ cup edam cheese, grated

1. Heat water in a pot and dissolve stock cube.
2. In a different pot heat the oil. Add onion and pumpkin to the oil and sauté until onion is soft.
3. Add the garlic and cook for a few more minutes until it all softens. Roughly mash the pumpkin with a fork.
4. Add the rice and cook until the rice looks clear (rather than white), then add one quarter of the hot stock to the pot and cook on medium heat, stirring occasionally.
5. Keep adding a little more stock (1/2 to 1 cup at a time) as the previous amount is absorbed. Stir regularly so that the rice doesn't stick. Cook until the risotto has a creamy consistency.
6. Add the frozen peas and bring back to temperature.
7. Remove from the heat, sprinkle with cheese over the top before serving.

Ngā mihi nui,
Beyning