

Nutrition News

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De'Shoin Friendship,
MPA, CFPP

Annrose Guarino,
PhD, RD

Sandra May
MS, RD

Heli Roy,
PhD, RD

September is

National Rice Month

National Rice Month celebrates the rice harvest and honors the contribution of the U.S. rice industry to America's economy.

Rice is an integral part of Louisiana culture and cuisine, and Louisiana produces the third-largest rice harvest in the nation. Louisiana farmers grow mostly long-grain rice, which has cooked grains that are separate and fluffy.

At only 10 cents per serving, enriched white rice and whole-grain brown rice are low in calories, sodium and cholesterol- and gluten-free, with only a trace of fat and no trans-fat or saturated fats. Rice is the healthful partner on the plate, pairing well with beans, seafood, lean protein, vegetables and fruits.

The new U.S. Department of Agriculture food plate icon illustrates in a simple but powerful way how consumers can eat a healthful diet every day and at every meal. The MyPlate icon, which replaces the MyPyramid image used since 1992, depicts proportional wedges of grains, fruits, vegetables and protein on a plate. Grains make up a large portion, signaling that USDA recognizes the importance of grains such as enriched white rice and whole-grain brown rice in the diet.



- Rice is a naturally nutritious grain.
- Rice is low in calories.
- The average American should eat six servings of grain foods daily – at least half of those whole grains and the rest enriched grains – according to the 2010 U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans.
- Published research shows that rice eaters have more healthful diets and reduced risk of obesity, heart disease and certain cancers.
- Rice is affordable. A serving of rice costs just 10 cents, making it a nutritional bargain.
- Rice does not contain added sugars.
- Rice is sodium-free and cholesterol-free and has only a trace of fat, with no trans-fat or saturated fat.
- Rice can be eaten by those with celiac disease or who have gluten intolerance. Rice is gluten-free and the least allergenic of all grains.
- Rice has more than 15 important vitamins and minerals.
- Rice provides natural energy by supplying complex carbohydrates that fuel physical activity.
- Rice is a source of resistant starch, which can aid with weight control.

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The MyPlate icon is meant to serve as a daily reminder about what foods should be included in each meal. Grains, fruits and vegetables covering about three-fourths of the plate illustrate the recommendation that 45-65 percent of calories come from carbohydrates, which should be natural, wholesome foods that contain no added sugars or saturated fat. The portion of the plate representing nutritious grains signifies the importance of rice in a healthful, balanced diet. You can feel good about choosing whole-grain brown rice and enriched, fortified white rice each day.

Enriched white rice is a good source of folate, providing 23 percent of the 400 micrograms women need every day. Fortified grains and rice are the largest source of folic acid in the U.S. diet, providing more than 15 percent of the total folic acid intake. Adequate folic acid fortification of grains has had a role in decreasing neural tube birth defects in the United States by 36 percent since 1998. Neural tube defect is a serious medical condition that results in lifelong disability for those who are affected.

Source: USA Rice

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