

Food & Drink

Today's chefs... Rice is a newly discovered appreciation for the kind of cooking that was practiced by the ancient based cuisines.

Rice pudding timeless dessert

DIY. Rice feeds more than half the world, but beyond pilao, biryani and everyday meals, this versatile grain also transforms into a rich and comforting dessert.

BY KADUMUKASA KIRONDE II

"May your rice never burn!" is a favourite New Year's Eve saying in China, and rice is the staple food for more than half of the world's population. For more than two thousand years, the world over, meals have begun with a bowl of rice. While here in Buganda, a meal without matooke is considered not to have been eaten at all. But matooke is a small potato compared to rice. Speaking of which, how many of you know that there are more than 40,000 known varieties of rice in the

world? Whereas the rice is usually accompanied by other staples, the meal would not have been filling without the all-important addition of rice and posho.

In Asian cooking the idea of the stir fries really acts as a wonderful fillip, and one shudders to think of how forlorn and bland they would be otherwise. As well as being nutritious, rice is cholesterol, fat and sodium-free, easy to digest and ideal for gluten-allergic people and last but not least, a good source of fibre and vitamins.

Americans and Europeans were somewhat slow on the take to realise

the versatile grain as being a little more than a side dish. They were loath to give up their typical meal that consisted of a lot of meat and fat with scant regard to adding grains, legumes, vegetables and fruits.

Today's chefs are making up for the oversight with a vengeance and rice has finally come into its own. Sharing in the spotlight with rice is a newly discovered appreciation for the kind of cooking that was practiced by the ancient based cuisines. This cooking style features loads of grains, vegetables, fruits and legumes with moderate amounts of animal-based foods.

So many housewives complain to me about the variability of the way their rice turns out and are often reduced to tears and embarrassment with the results of their rice! As is the case with flour, the rice itself may have more or less moisture in its makeup. In Japan the standard ratio is eight cups of water to eight cups of rice for the first six weeks after harvest. The amount of water then rises steadily and when the rice is 11 months old the ratio changes wherein eight cups of rice need 10 cups of water.

Besides moisture variability in rice, but the type must also be reckoned with. Brown rice which tends to retain its bran coat and germ, takes forever to tenderise and is unquestionably more nutritionally valuable than the run of the mill highly polished white rice that obtains all over Uganda.

There are also differences in the grain hybrids. Use short or medium grain types which cook up tender and moist in recipes that call for sauces and puddings. Long grain types are best for salads, soups and main dishes where each grain should be separate and fluffy. This is especially true when making the likes of pilao, biryani, Jollof etc.

Another popular rice to be found on the market in America and Europe are the preprocessed rices such as Uncle Ben's rice. When using these, follow the directions on the label bearing in mind that some of these are par boiled before milling and have greater nutritional value than the polished white rice.

RICE PUDDING

6 to 8 Servings

Preheat oven to 325 ° FH/162 ° C

Have ready:

- 2 cups short or medium grain boiled rice
- Combine and beat well and add:
- 1 ½ cups milk
- ¼ teaspoons salt
- 4 to 6 tablespoons sugar or ½ cup brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon soft butter
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 2 to 4 eggs
- Add: ½ teaspoon grated lemon rind
- 1 teaspoon lemon juice
- (½ cup raisins or dates)
- Combine these ingredients lightly with a fork.
- Grease a baking dish and cover the bottom and sides with: (Cake or cookie crumbs)
- Put rice in the dish and cover the top with more crumbs.
- Bake the pudding until set for about 50 minutes.

• Serve hot or cold: Cream or fruit



Kadumukasa Kironde II
Weekend Cuisine

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Titbits
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You can make such a rice pudding at home. PHOTO/FIREFLY-GENERATED