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Category : [May 1979](#)

Published by Anonymous on May. 02, 1979

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Selections of South Indian Rice & Curry Vegetarian Cuisine

Cooking Rice

Rice is the staple grain in the South Indian meal, and it is therefore important to obtain a good quality "brown" rice, one that has not been overly polished and retains the salts, vitamins and minerals.

Put the washed rice into a pot and add salt and enough water to bring the water level about an inch above the rice. Bring to a vigorous boil over a high heat. Reduce to a medium heat and cover. The rice will boil and then steam for about 30 minutes. Watch it carefully at this stage so that the water does not boil away and cause the rice to burn. Once the rice is steaming. DO NOT STIR IT. Stirring will break down the natural starch matrix, resulting in a mushy, wet mass. To check the level of water when it is nearly boiled away, take a chopstick or similar instrument and bore a small hole through the rice all the way to the bottom. You will be able to look down and see the water bubbling. When it stops bubbling, the water is gone and the heat must be turned off. Allow the rice to stand another ten or twenty minutes before serving so that excess moisture can escape, remembering again not to stir.

We find that it takes 3 cups of uncooked rice to serve four hungry adults, to which we add 1 1/2 teaspoons of salt. After it is cooked, we often add 1/8 cube of butter on the top after the heat has been turned off and before the rice is served. Besides this daily rice, there are many special rices used for feasts for guests and special days. There is a tomato rice, a coconut rice, a yogurt rice, a vegetable rice, a lemon rice and a combination of rice and dal called pongal." One of our favorite special rices is lemon rice, a good one to save and to savor for that special meal.

LEMON RICE

3 cups of uncooked brown rice

1 1/2 fresh lemons

3/4 tsp of turmeric powder

1 1/2 tsp. salt

1 tbsp. ghee/4 ounces of cashew nuts

1 tbsp. of garam masala #2

1. Boil the rice as described on opposite page.
2. Chop the cashews and fry in the ghee.
3. Add garam masala to ghee and cook 2 minutes.
4. Add uncooked turmeric & lemon juice to rice.
5. Add ghee and nuts to rice and stir well.