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HOUSEHOLD CALENDAR
More About Rice

A radio talk by Miss Ruth Van Deman, Bureau of Home Economics, delivered in the Department of Agriculture period of the National Farm and Home Hour, broadcast by a network of 48 associate NBC stations, Thursday, October 29, 1936.

MR. SALISBURY: Ruth, I didn't know whether you'd be able to make it over here today or not.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Oh, because of the Outlook Conference you mean?

MR. SALISBURY: Yes, I thought you might be so deep in those conferences on farm family living that you couldn't pull out.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Well, you know everybody has to come up for air now and then.

MR. SALISBURY: We're glad you came up for air at this particular station.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Now, speaking quite seriously about the Outlook Conference, Miss Mary Rokahr and Doctor Hazel Stiebeling will be giving you reports about it during the next two weeks. Right now they're working day and night with the home management specialists -- 40 or so of them, who have come in from the States bringing reports of conditions all over the country.

Today I'd like to go back to the subject of rice, which I had something to say about last week. Almost before I was off the air people began writing me letters about rice.

MR. SALISBURY: Rice thrown at you from every direction.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Figuratively speaking. But very frankly speaking, I was delighted to have a letter from South Carolina telling me all about that famous dish called Hoppin' John, made from rice, and peas, and pork. And I've also had some people taking me severely to task.

MR. SALISBURY: Taking you to task, Miss Van Deman, what did you say that was wrong?

MISS VAN DEMAN: It was chiefly what I didn't say. Especially about brown rice. Time was short, so I talked only about cooking white rice, since that's the kind we use mostly in this country. The reason is, of course, that white rice will keep almost indefinitely, and it can be handled and sold without danger of its going bad or becoming infested with weevils before the consumer buys it.

But brown rice does have a higher food value. It has the germ and the outer layers, which contain certain minerals and vitamins. When rice is put through the modern milling process, these parts of the grain go into rice polishings, which are generally sold as a by-product. But whether this loss is a serious one for us depends on how important a part rice plays in our daily diet and on what else we eat.

(over)

Here in the United States we have so many kinds of grain products to choose from that most of us don't make rice one of our chief articles of diet, as people do in China and Japan, for instance. And we have more fruits and vegetables, and milk, and eggs, and fresh meat, and other "protective" foods. So we try to make up a well-balanced diet from a variety of foods, and when we do that it isn't all-important whether our rice is brown or white.

But in cooking, brown rice needs a little different treatment. Start it off in a large quantity of boiling water -- about eight times as much water as you have rice -- and boil it gently for about 30 minutes. Then don't drain off the water as you would from white rice, but cover the kettle, and let the brown rice simmer until the water is absorbed. The branny coat keeps the starch from cooking out into the water and brown rice doesn't become sticky as white rice does unless it is handled just right.

And, by the way, I want to thank the listener in Kansas City, Missouri, for the directions for cooking rice the Chinese way in a very heavy kettle. Yes, I know that's the Oriental way of getting a very dry, flaky product. But most of us Americans like to use a short-cut if it leads to the same end. So most of us find it more practical to cook our rice quickly in a large quantity of water. When we drain it, all we lose is a little starch in the water -- no great sacrifice of food value.

Last week I didn't have a chance to mention wild rice either. As you know, it's the grain that grows in some of our marshes and along lake shores, and that the Indians taught us to collect and parch. The botanists say that strictly speaking this isn't true rice at all. Anyway, the grains have about the same shape as the long-grain type of cultivated rice. The flavor of wild rice though is very distinctive, and goes particularly well with duck, and game, and meats of pronounced flavor. Only a small quantity of wild rice is marketed. It's very much of a luxury product. As far as the cooking goes, you can treat it just as you would brown rice.

Of course, there are innumerable ways of using rice in combination with other foods. It's what you might call a good mixer. It has a friendly personality that goes along with whatever company it keeps, and more than pays its way. Like all the other cereals, rice ranks high as a low-cost food to supply energy.

MR. SALISBURY: That's cheerful news, and I might repeat that there's plenty of rice this year -- practically a bumper crop.