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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Monday, July 18, 1932.

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "Rice for Thrifty Dishes". Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U.S.D.A.

Maybe you've never heard the story of the first rice that came to this country. I never had until the other day. Where do you think it came from? No, not China. Guess again. It came from Africa. The story goes that a certain Captain Smith, returning from Madagascar way back in 1694, presented a bag of "paddy" to a merchant in Charleston, South Carolina. "Paddy", you know, is the name for rough rice.

I'm telling you that story because another Monday has rolled around again and we're about to have another saving day chat. So the subject up for discussion is that good and economical food--rice. A food which deserves a place in your summer menu. Rice combined with milk is one of the cereals recommended by nutritionists as the basis of the most economical and balanced diet possible to devise.

As you know, rice is one of the important cereal crops of our Southern States. It sells in the retail market in bulk for 3 to 5 cents a pound. And one pound of rice cooked makes more than ten cupfuls. In other words, about two cupfuls of dry rice, costing perhaps five cents or less, makes ten cups of boiled rice, enough to serve ten people generously. Every one from Dixie knows that a bowl of rice with gravy is the mainstay of many a Southern meal.

Rice is first of all an energy food, because it contains, like all other grains, a high percentage of starch. But it's a more adaptable food than most other cereals. For you can serve it at breakfast, dinner or supper, and you can serve it in many different ways.

For breakfast, rice makes a nice cooked cereal, with or without fruit, as you please. By the way, if you cook it in milk, it makes a creamy dish of high food value; a dish that will help put the children's daily milk quota into their diet.

As we remarked, rice is a most adaptable or versatile food. It's very good served by itself and also very good combined with many other foods. For lunch or dinner, it's excellent in soup. For the main course, rice is excellent used instead of potatoes as the starchy dish. Yes, for a change from potatoes, I don't know anything better than a steaming hot dish of white fluffy rice, cooked so that every little kernel is tender yet in perfect shape. You can serve boiled rice just as you do potatoes -- with butter or gravy.

R-H.C. 7/18/32

As for those combinations with other foods, I can't begin to tell you half of them. Rice is good with chopped ham or other chopped meat; scalloped with cheese or served with cheese sauce; or combined with different vegetables. Rice with tomato sauce is a favorite dish. So is rice combined with stewed tomatoes and chopped green peppers, or rice with green peas. Then there are rice croquettes and corn muffins made with boiled rice.

As for dessert, there again you can feature rice in a number of different ways. That good old-fashioned dish, baked rice pudding, deserves mention. When I was a youngster a favorite dessert in our home was simple boiled rice served with cream and maple sugar. Boiled rice is also good with fruit or chocolate sauce. Then there's rice custard, rice molded and served with preserved or fresh fruit, rice fritters served with jelly--in fact, there are more delicious ways to serve rice than you can shake a stick at, certainly more than I can possibly name in one Housekeepers' Chat period. But no doubt you know already how many things you can do with rice.

It's not just its low cost that makes rice a thrifty food. It's such a help in using up left-overs. Rice you see is one of those useful "extenders" we talked about a week or so ago. You can use rice instead of bread crumbs in making a meat loaf or any scalloped dish, or you can combine it with left-over bits of meat and gravy. You can use rice for stuffings. It's very good for stuffing tomatoes or peppers, for example, and some cooks like it for stuffing meat and fowl. Because rice is a bland food, it combines nicely with any food having a distinct flavor.

So much for ways to use rice. Now a word about buying it. We housekeepers would have a lot easier time when we go shopping if dealers would sell rice unmixed and labeled as to grade. There are so many varieties and grades of this food. And, you see, the cooking qualities, especially the cooking times vary with the kind of rice. So a mixture of different kinds, such as we often get, will cook unevenly.

Do you ever hear of "brewer's rice?" That's a bargain in rice. It's the rice that is broken in milling. Of course, it's not so attractive looking as whole rice in perfect kernels, but it has the same food value and sells for even less. In any combination dish, you can just as well use this broken rice--or any other of the cheaper grades. But, if you're serving plain boiled rice, the broken grains won't do. The attractive appearance of the dish depends on grains that are whole and stand apart.

Probably the form of rice that you know best is the white, polished kind. But brown rice, the kind that isn't polished, has a higher food value. You see, the polishing process takes off the outer coat of the grain. This outer coat contains most of the minerals and vitamins as well as the protein in the rice grain. When the polishing process removes this outer coat, it also removes these good food substances and leaves only the white starchy part of the grain. With our varied diet here in America, this loss of minerals and vitamins in the process of polishing rice isn't so important to our health as it is in Oriental countries where the people live almost exclusively on rice. In such countries, the deficiency disease known as beriberi is very common among people who eat only polished rice. But beriberi doesn't occur among people who use brown rice. Why? Because, the protective vitamin B is in the outer layer of the rice grain. Brown rice has this layer. Polished rice hasn't. By the way, you can buy brown rice in packages in many grocery stores.

You might suppose that anyone could boil rice without going wrong. But actually there's an art to this simple cooking process. Boiled rice can be a heavy sticky mass. The kernels can come out of the cooking water sticky on the outside and hard on the inside. But ideal boiled rice is white or creamy white and every grain is tender all the way through but unbroken and separate from every other grain. There's nothing at all sticky about properly boiled rice.

Well, what's the secret of cooking rice perfectly? First, allow two quarts of salted water to every cup of rice. Put the water in the kettle, let it come to a boil, then drop in the rice gradually and let it boil gently until it is tender. By the way, if you buy rice in bulk, wash it off in clear water before putting it on to cook. When the rice is tender, drain off the cooking water and pour clear water over the rice to remove any starch that may stick to the grains.

In some parts of the country the minerals in the water may give the boiled rice a grayish or greenish color. A pinch of cream of tartar in the cooking water will prevent this.

You boil brown rice in the same way that you do white rice, with one exception. This exception is that after boiling the brown rice gently about thirty minutes, you cover the kettle and allow the rice to simmer until it is cooked through and has absorbed all the water.

The manu for today gives you a choice of good main dishes of rice-- good and inexpensive dishes, I should have said. Here's the menu:

Rice ring with beef and ham gumbo; or Rice pilau; then, Lettuce salad cut across the grain and served with French dressing; Crusty rolls or French bread; and for dessert, fresh fruit in season.

It's too bad time flies so fast. I wanted to give you at least one of those good rice recipes today. But I'll have to put it off until tomorrow. First thing tomorrow, then, you shall have a recipe for rice pilau-- something good and different. Then, if you aren't too tired, I'll give you the recipe for beef and ham gumbo in a rice ring. Also I'll have answers to several of your questions.

