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HOMEMAKERS' CHAT

Saturday, Sept. 30, 1939

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "RICE COOKED TO PERFECTION." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics,
U. S. D. A.

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Women have been cooking rice for thousands of years. But a good many women don't know all the secrets of rice cookery even yet. You see, some of these secrets have only come to light recently since foods-and-cookery scientists began testing rice in the laboratory.

Today I'm going to report a few of the fine points about cooking rice because rice is plentiful and cheap. Perhaps you know that much of last year's great rice crop has been carried over to add to this year's big crop. So now is your opportunity to make the most of this good food. Now is the time to serve rice in soup, meat dishes, waffles and other quick breads, and desserts. Rice fits in almost anywhere in the meal.

But let's get back to some of the secrets of cooking rice.

First, if you want to save time in cooking, buy varieties that cook fast.

Look for the name of the variety on the box. Some varieties take as little as 16 minutes to boil tender; others need as much as 24 or 25 minutes. For speedy cooking remember the name Rexoro. That's the rice that cooks in 16 minutes. Blue Rose is the variety produced and sold in largest quantity in this country. It needs 22 minutes of boiling. The shortgrain California rice called Caloro needs 20 minutes. Early Prolific is the slowest. It requires 24 minutes of boiling.

Rice cooked to perfection is white, fluffy, and tender with every grain separate. But unless you know a few tricks to make it that way, it's likely to come out of the kettle a sticky, pasty, heavy mass. Or worse still, each grain may be sticky on the outside and hard and raw inside.

The first step toward ideal boiled rice is to rinse the dry rice in warm water. The usual household practice is to use cold water. But the foods people have found that cold water is not so effective as hot water in rinsing off starchy powder or dust that may be clinging to the grains.

The next step is to measure your rice, water, and salt. For each cup of dry rice use 2 quarts of water and 2 teaspoons of salt. That's easy to remember: 1 cup of rice, 2 quarts of water, 2 teaspoons of salt.

Next important point: Have the water boiling rapidly when you put the rice in. But once the rice has started to dance in the kettle, lower the heat and let the rice boil gently until it is tender. You see, if you keep the rice boiling rapidly all the time, the grains will break up. On the other hand, if you let the water get down to simmering instead of boiling, the grains will become sticky. Gentle boiling is the happy medium.

When rice has cooked just long enough, it will be tender all through but the grains will still be whole and unbroken. Before taking it off the stove, lift a few grains out with a fork and press them between your thumb and finger to be sure there is no hard center.

Now be sure you have a good-sized colander or sieve to drain the rice in-- large enough so it won't pack down and lose its fluffiness. Now give the rice another warm water rinse to wash away the sticky starch and separate the grains.

The last step toward perfect boiled rice is to steam it. Cover the sieve or colander of boiled rice with a cloth, and set it over a kettle of steaming water or put it in a warm oven. You'll be surprised how much the grains will swell in 10 to 15 minutes. One cup of uncooked rice, prepared as I've described, will make between 3 and 4 cups of fluffy boiled rice with big separate grains.

Every good rule has an exception, they say. And so it is about boiled rice.

Fluffy rice with every grain distinct is ideal except when you want boiled rice for croquettes, patties, or a rice ring. Then, you want rice softer and moister and slightly sticky so it will hold together. To get soft moist boiled rice, cook it in a double boiler, or a fireless or waterless cooker. Add 2 cups of water to 1 cup of rice, and cook until the rice is tender. Then drain, but do not rinse in hot water.

As for ways to use rice, they are so numerous that it would take all day to tell you about them. Almost every country around the world has its favorite rice dish. But if you'd like recipes for some of the best American rice dishes, you will find them in one of the Department of Agriculture's free leaflets. Send a postcard direct to the Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. asking for Leaflet No. 112 called "Cooking American Varieties of Rice." Once more: Leaflet No. 112, "Cooking American Varieties of Rice." It's free from the Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C. as long as the supply lasts.

