




Rice

For centuries, rice was a standard of wealth and is used as a symbol of life and fertility.



Rice cultivation began in California during the Gold Rush when the lure of finding gold attracted adventurers immigrants from all over the world. The immigrants from China felt themselves fortunate to find that California have a perfect climate and soil for agriculture, and start farming rice for their own consumption. Although commercial production started in 1912, by 2006 the state of California becomes the second largest producer of rice crop in the United States. Better yet, today California's rice is very popular and exported worldwide. It's an industry that annually contributes over \$ 1.3 billion dollars to the state's economy.

Actually the Sacramento Valley is the heart of California's rice industry, much like the Napa Valley is to premium wine and wine grapes. They produce high-quality varieties of short, medium and long grain rice, as well as specialty rice.

The Rice Goodness

Whether you want to improve your nutrition, boost your energy, pursue lose weight, help yourself in preventing chronic diseases to live well, long, strong and to the most, rice can help you to achieve your goals.



The individual nutrients in whole-grain foods are: fiber, antioxidants, phytonutrients, and vitamins and minerals. Each offer important health benefits of their own. When they work together in the "whole" food, however, they interact in powerful ways that help protect your health.

The benefits are plenty!

Rice is a nutrient-rich carbohydrate that acts as fuel for the body by providing the necessary energy that the body needs for physical activity, and aids in normal functioning of the brain. Furthermore, research shows that Americans who eat enriched and whole grain rice consume more folic acid, potassium, iron, and are less likely to be overweight, or have high blood pressure.

Rice is among the food groups that form the basis of a healthy diet, and fits in the dietary recommendations to get the most nutrition from calories consumed.

The U.S. Dietary Guidelines and MyPyramid recommend eating three or more ounces of grains per day, depending upon calorie needs. A one-ounce serving of a grain food is equivalent to a 1/2 cup of rice, or other whole grain products. To find the total amount of grains you should be eating, visit www.mypyramid.gov.



GRAINS

The health benefits of whole grains most documented by repeated studies include:

- stroke risk reduced 30-36%
- type 2 diabetes risk reduced 21-30%
- heart disease risk reduced 25-28%
- better weight maintenance

Other benefits included by recent studies are:

- reduced risk of asthma
- healthier carotid arteries
- reduction of inflammatory disease risk
- lower risk of colorectal cancer
- healthier blood pressure levels
- less gum disease and tooth loss

Whole-grain products are naturally enriched with a synthetic form of water-soluble vitamin B called folic acid. The U.S. Dietary Guidelines reaffirms the importance of consuming whole grain rice for women of childbearing age and adolescent girls to reduce birth defects; and actually, only 1/2 of cup of cooked rice provides 23 percent of the recommended daily value of folic acid.

Rice can be the foundation for healthy eating during pregnancy and beyond. The whole grain foods including the brown rice are highly recommended by nutritionists, and it was included in the new WIC Food Package as a perfect partner for other healthy foods from the WIC program. A program nationally recognized as an effective nutrition program providing nutritious foods, and nutrition education that helps pregnant women, new mothers, and young children eat well, learn about nutrition, and stay healthy.

Rice partners well with other healthy foods such as vegetables, beans and lean proteins such as chicken, turkey, tuna, etc., and provides over 15 essential nutrients. Furthermore, it is easy to digest, is relatively low in calories, is free of gluten, cholesterol, sodium, trans-fat, and it is very economical as well. At only 10 cents per serving, rice is a smart and affordable choice for heart-healthy eating, plus it's versatility of uses and recipes make this nutrient-rich cereal to fit with any meal. Could be breakfast, lunch, dinner, dessert or even a snack!

Did you know that brown rice is whole grain rice before the bran layer is removed to make the white rice?

The bran layer contains fiber and many nutrients, and gives brown rice a nuttier special taste and chewier texture. So when you choose brown rice, you get great taste additional to the nutritional benefits of the entire grain.

Enriched grain products add back some of the B vitamins -- thiamin, folic acid, riboflavin, and niacin -- and iron lost when the grain was milled. But lots of other nutrients and fiber don't get added back.