

# How to Cook Rice

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Fill a pot with 1 part rice and 2 parts water and bring it to a boil. Cover the pot with a lid, and simmer for 15 to 20 minutes. Remove from heat, and let it sit for 5 minutes. Remove the lid, fluff the rice with a fork, and serve it.

Method  
1

## Understanding the basics of rice cooking

- 1 Purchase good quality rice for a good quality outcome.** Old rice will not produce a tasty or light a meal as fresher rice. Rice can be cooked in water, stock, milk, or [broth](#).
- 2 Consider whether or not you wish to wash the rice.** For rice bought in a Western country, it has already been washed and cleaned prior to purchase.<sup>[1][2]</sup> Washing will simply remove nutrients (for example, in the United States, common rice is usually fortified with [vitamins](#) and minerals like niacin and iron). However, washing is considered useful for separating the grains of rice (and is often done in Asian countries),<sup>[3]</sup> resulting in fluffier, lighter cooked rice with a fuller grain that doesn't stick. And the Larousse Gastronomique recommends that unless rice has been pretreated or pre-cooked, it should always be washed in running water and drained well prior to cooking.<sup>[4]</sup>
  - Washing will remove a good percentage of the starch in the grain, leaving the protein intact.<sup>[5]</sup>
- 3 Apart from [basmati rice](#) and [wild rice](#), there is no need to soak the rice unless the recipe says so.**<sup>[6]</sup> If you decide to soak, or if the recipe requires it, the usual method is as follows:
  - Soak the rice in cold water for 30-60 minutes; or
  - Rinse or wash the rice in the sink until the water is clear enough to see the rice through it. Basically, keep the water running on low while shaking the [rice](#) until the foggy white color turns clear.
  - Rice that improves with soaking includes basmati, Thai, and long-grain rice.<sup>[7]</sup>
- 4 Cook rice to the point of being [al dente](#) (firm but not hard), with separate grains, while retaining its flavor.**<sup>[8]</sup> This does not apply for rice cooked in milk for dessert purposes, or for [sticky rice](#).
- 5 Be careful not to split the grains unless this is the effect desired.** There are two actions that can cause the grains to break open, resulting in a mushy mess. One is to add salt to the water, something that chef Paul Gayler recommends against.<sup>[9]</sup> Equally, do not stir rice while it is cooking because this will also cause the grains to break, giving you sticky rice (unless that's the effect you're after, of course). Even sticking the spoon in to taste the rice can impact its structure while cooking. The only exception to this rule is [risotto](#), which needs to be stirred.<sup>[10]</sup>
  - [Salt](#) is not necessary when cooking rice, but some chefs believe it should be added. Unless you add a ridiculous amount of salt, it will not significantly change the boiling temperature or time, but it will enhance the flavor of the rice. However, it may break the grains open as mentioned above, so you might like to experiment to see what works best for you.
- 6 Use a [large saucepan](#) or [pot](#).** Rice needs plenty of cooking space to avoid sticking or burning, and to give it the space to move about. The grains also expand quite a bit.
- 7 Have a rough idea of the right amounts of rice.** Standard rice amounts suggested by the Larousse Gastronomique are:<sup>[11]</sup>
  - 65g (2 1/2 oz, 1/3 cup) per serving for a main dish

- 25 g (1 oz, 2 tablespoons) per serving for an hors d'oeuvre
- 40g (1 1/2 oz, 3 tablespoons) per serving for a [dessert](#)
- 50g (2 oz) uncooked per person for pilafs<sup>[12]</sup>
- 25-40g (1-1 1/2 oz) per person for salads<sup>[13]</sup>
- 15-20g (1/2 - 3/4 oz) per person for rice pudding.<sup>[14]</sup>

**8** **Always remove rice from the pan or pot as soon as it is cooked.** It continues to cook in the pot or pan, risking overcooking if left there.

- To test for "doneness", squeeze rice grains between your fingers. The grains should feel tender and not have a hard center.<sup>[15]</sup>

Method  
2

### Absorption method 1

With the technique outlined in this section, sticking or burning rice is no longer a worry. Since the pot does not remain over the heat source, and the steam will keep the pot moist even after the rice finishes cooking, you can walk away, forget about it, and go take a nap. You'll still get excellent rice!

**1** **Measure one cup of washed rice into a pot.** If you skipped the soaking/washing, you can start here with dry rice out of the bag.

**2** **Pour one and a half cups of cold water into the pot.** It depends on the [rice](#) and your preference – you may want to add 1.75 cups of water.

**3** **Add 1/2 tablespoon of salt to the pot.** This step is optional if you don't agree on adding salt to rice.

**4** **Place the pot over a moderate to high heat.**

**5** **When the rice comes to a rolling boil, turn down the heat to the minimum possible, and continue simmering for five more minutes.** Place a well sealed lid on the pot at this time.

- A "rolling boil" is when large bubbles appear that cannot be dissipated by stirring, and will keep breaking the surface. When making rice, the rolling boil is important so that enough steam builds up to completely cook the rice without it being over an open flame.

**6** **Turn off the heat after five minutes.** Place a [paper towel](#) between the lid and the pot to avoid moisture buildup. Do not lift the lid as the [steam](#) inside will cook the rice through.

- The pot of rice will be fully cooked, light and ready to eat about 10 minutes after the heat is turned off.

**7** **Take a little taste of the rice to be sure it is cooked (this should be no problem if you measured out the water correctly).** If the rice is still a bit crunchy, put the lid back on to retain the steam, and get a little bit of hot water from the tap (not too much, maybe a quarter of a cup), and add it to the pot. Put the lid back on and wait another few minutes.

**8** **Once cooked, remove the lid and allow the steam to escape.** Fluff the grains using a [fork](#).<sup>[16]</sup>

**9** **Transfer rice to a heated serving dish using a metal spoon.** A wooden spoon tends to crush the rice.<sup>[17]</sup>

Method  
3**Absorption method 2**

This method follows the one suggested by Paul Gayler.<sup>[18]</sup>

- 1 Place the rice and water into a large saucepan or pot.** The suggested ratio is 450g (1 lb) long-grain white rice and 600ml (1 pint) water.
- 2 Bring to the boil over moderate heat.** Stir once only, then drop the heat to a simmer. Leave to simmer for 10-12 minutes, uncovered. During this time, the water should be absorbed by the rice.
- 3 Take the pot off the heat.** Place a dishcloth over the pot and add the lid of the pot over the dishcloth (it should fit tightly). Place the pot on a very low heat and leave it for 10 minutes.
- 4 Remove the pot from the heat and allow it to sit for 5 minutes as is.** Once the time is up, remove the lid and dishcloth and serve the rice.

Method  
4**Absorption method 3**

This method follows the one suggested by John Newton in *Food: The Essential A-Z Guide*.<sup>[19]</sup>

- 1 Place 200g (7 oz) of rice into the saucepan.**
- 2 Put a clean finger into the rice.** Pour in the water until it reaches your first finger joint.
- 3 Fit a tight lid onto the saucepan.** Bring the water to the boil.
- 4 Once boiling, reduce to low heat and continue cooking.** The rice is ready when steam holes can be observed across the rice.
- 5 Remove the lid.** This will let the steam escape. Use a fork to fluff the grains and pour straight into the serving dish.

Method  
5**Absorption method 4**

This is based on a method suggested in the Larousse Gastronomique.<sup>[20]</sup> This method can be useful if you're doing lots of other things in the kitchen to prepare for a meal but that don't require the oven and you have plenty of time for the rice to slowly cook away in the oven.

- 1 Pour 1 kg (2 1/4 lb, 5 cups) of rice into 3 liters (6 1/3 pints, 3 quarts) of boiling, salted water.** Simmer for 10 minutes.
- 2 Remove the rice from the heat and wash in cold water.**
- 3 Place the washed rice into a covered, oven-proof dish.** Put the dish into a cool oven and leave there until the rice is cooked.

Method  
6

## Boiling rice (hot water method)

This method is good for salads or dishes where the rice is to be served cold.<sup>[21]</sup>

- 1 Be prepared to add lots of water for the best outcome.** The traditional method of boiling advocates twice the volume of water for boiling rice as the standard. However, chef Paul Gayler suggests that it is much better to **boil rice** in five to six times its volume of water for excellent results because this helps to dilute the starch and leaves distinct, light rice grains.<sup>[22]</sup> The following method is based on Paul Gayler's measurements and method.<sup>[23]</sup>
- 2 Use a large pot or saucepan.** Pour 3 liters (6 1/3 pints) of water in the pot. Bring the water to a rolling boil.
- 3 Add 460g (1 lb) of rice.** Reduce the water to a simmer and cook for 12 to 15 minutes, or until tender but firm.
- 4 Pour the rice straight into a colander.** Cover the colander with a clean cloth (a dish towel is ideal) and leave it to stand for 10 minutes.
- 5 Prior to serving, fluff the rice with a fork and serve.**

Method  
7

## Steaming rice

This method is based on the Larousse Gastronomique method.<sup>[24]</sup>

- 1 Wash the rice in cold water.**
- 2 Bring water to boil in the steamer.** Place the rice into the steamer.
- 3 Steam for 20–40 minutes.** The amount of time needed will depend on the variety of rice used.

Method  
8

## Cooking rice au gras/toasting

"Au gras" is the French term for "cooking in fat". It is the method used to prepare rice prior to making a **pilaf**, **risotto**, or **paella**. The purpose behind it is to increase the flavor of the rice.

- 1 Place olive oil or butter into the frying pan or skillet.**
- 2 Add the amount of rice suggested by the recipe.**
- 3 Gently fry over a low to medium heat.** In this case, stirring with a wooden spatula is advisable.
- 4 Avoid browning or burning the rice.** It should become transparent but not browned. The usual amount of cooking time is 1 to 2 minutes but this may vary depending on the recipe.<sup>[25]</sup>
- 5 Follow the recipe instructions for addition of the liquid and its absorption.**

Method  
9

## Electric rice cooker

- 1 Read the instructions.** Rice cookers vary and you should understand the ins and outs of your rice cooker prior to use. It is also important to purchase a good quality rice cooker to ensure that the thermostat is accurate.
- 2 Use the electric rice cooker for glutinous rice, Japanese sushi rice, and brown rice.**<sup>[26]</sup> Use the absorption method 2 outlined above, and follow the timing suggestions of the manufacturer.<sup>[27]</sup>

Method  
10

## Microwave rice

Interestingly, this is not a time-saving method, just one of convenience for those who prefer to do everything with a microwave. This method is the one suggested by Paul Gayler.<sup>[28]</sup>

- 1 Find a bowl large enough.** The ratio of rice to water should be 450g (1 lb) rice and 600ml (1 pint) water, so check the bowl can manage this amount. Add both water and rice.
  - Consider adding a touch of butter or oil to the water. This can help prevent the rice from boiling over.<sup>[29]</sup>
  - Cover the bowl.
- 2 Place the bowl in the microwave with care.** Heat initially for 5 minutes on full power.
- 3 Microwave on half power for 15 minutes.** Avoid stirring it at any stage.
- 4 Allow to stand for a few minutes (up to 10 minutes is best), then serve as usual.**

Method  
11

## Rice in milk

This method is based on the one outlined in the Larousse Gastronomique.<sup>[30]</sup>

- 1 Blanch the rice in hot water.** Rinse it and drain it well.
- 2 Pour the milk into a saucepan or pot.** The amount should be stated in the recipe.
- 3 Add the rinsed rice.** Cook slowly, as advised in the recipe. The consistency usually sought for milk rice desserts is one of a creamy paste.

Method  
12

## Reheating rice

It is possible to reheat rice, with varying degrees of success.

- 1 Try to maintain moisture.** Steaming, microwaving, or baking next to a bowl of water are good options. However, whatever you do, be sure to cook it until it's piping hot; this is essential to destroy any bacteria that might have started using it as a growth medium.<sup>[31]</sup>

## Community Q&A

How can I cook rice to make sure the cooked grains do not stick together?

wikiHow  
Contributor

Rinse the cooked rice with hot water to remove the starch that makes it sticky.

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## Tips

- Did you know? **Rice paper** isn't made from rice; it actually comes from the pith a small tree.<sup>[32]</sup>
- If the rice is a major component of the dish, you might need up to 1 cup of rice per adult. This is quite a lot though, so don't be afraid to heat up leftovers!
- You may wish to tweak the "rice to water ratio" with experience - for example: for larger quantities of rice, you may find a little less or more than one and a half the amount of water results in better rice.
- Your base measurement doesn't need to be a cup necessarily - the key is to add the same ratio of water to rice, whatever the quantity.
- Pour some water into the pot after taking out the cooked rice, it will make the pot easier to be cleaned.
- When the rice first boils, it might weep a bit or even lift the lid. Keep watch and an ear out for the start of the boil.
- Instead of cooking the rice in water, you can use beef or **chicken broth**. **Stock** of any flavor can also be substituted for water.
- One cup of dry rice grains cooked in this way is about sufficient to accompany a meal for 2 adults.
- Water boils at a lower temperature at altitude. If you live at a high altitude it will take longer to cook rice using this method.
- It works best to use the original lid of the pot you use, since it will seal best.

## Warnings

- Not everyone agrees on how much water to cook rice in and it's likely to be an ongoing dispute!<sup>[33]</sup>

## Things You'll Need

- Rice

- Water
- Pot/saucepan with a tight-fitting lid
- Something to measure with (cup, mug, etc.)
- Stove
- Paper towel
- Salt

### Sources and Citations

1. Jill Norman, *The Cook's Book*, p. 424, (2005), ISBN 1-74033-454-X
2. John Newton, *Food: The Essential A-Z Guide*, p. 332, (2001), ISBN 1-74045-031-0
3. John Newton, *Food: The Essential A-Z Guide*, p. 332, (2001), ISBN 1-74045-031-0

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