

COMMENT

What's the difference between long grain and short grain rice?

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What's Cookin'

Today's recipe is simply the best rice pudding I've ever had. My grandma, mom (and I) have made one that contains eggs and gets baked in the oven that I love as well, but nothing beats this creamy stove-top version. Keep a close eye on it though, as it can stick and burn. For best results, let it cool slightly, then serve! It can be warmed up later or served cold, but I like it best, warm, right off the stove!

The recipe calls for long grain rice (because I assumed that's what most of you had in your cupboard), but you can use medium grain too. Here's a little info about rice (one of the three most commonly grown crops in the world). Long grain rice has long, slender grains. They tend to stay separate when cooked, making them ideal for a light, fluffy rice. Medium grain rice has a shorter, fatter kernel and stays somewhat sticky when cooked, making it ideal for risotto and rice

pudding. Short grain rice is almost round and is very sticky when cooked, making it perfect for sushi.

Brown rice has the outer bran and husk layers in tact. These layers contain most of the vitamins and minerals and yield a nutty flavour to the rice. Brown rice takes a little more liquid to cook than white rice and takes much longer. Converted rice is steamed before the husk is removed, so some of the nutrients of the outer layers are absorbed by the rice, as well as some of the colour—making it beige rather than white and somewhat more nutritious than white rice. It also cooks up a bit faster.

Wild rice is not a rice, but a grass seed. Very nutritious, takes a long time to cook and is excellent made into salads or used as a stuffing for poultry.

Have fun and keep cooking!

World's Best Rice Pudding

Serves 8

INGREDIENTS

- 1/4 cup brandy
- 3/4 cup dried apricots or mangoes, chopped
- 1 cup long grain white rice (not parboiled)
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 2 1/2 cups whole milk
- 2 1/2 cups 10% cream
- 2/3 cup white sugar
- 1/2 vanilla bean (split lengthwise)
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- 1 tsp ground cardamom



Bring two cups water to a boil in a large pot. Add salt and rice. Cover and simmer over low heat, stirring once or twice during cooking—approximately 15 minutes.

Add milk, cream, sugar and vanilla bean. Mix well.

Continue to cook, uncovered, stirring frequently approximately 30 minutes.

As mixture thickens, reduce to low and continue cooking for another 10-15 minutes until most liquid has been absorbed and pudding is thick. Remove from heat.

Remove vanilla bean. Drain apricots and add apricots to pudding.

Add spices. Mix well.

Allow to cool slightly and serve at room temperature.

METHOD

Warm brandy in a small pot. Add dried fruit. Let sit for at least one hour.

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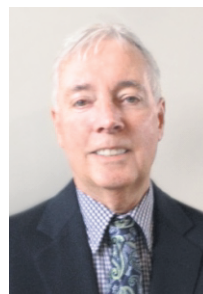
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