

COOKING SKILLS

Cooking Skills: Rice 1

Cooking rice every way: boiling, absorption, brown and mixed grains, pilaf, fried rice, risotto and rice puddings

9 Chapters | Philip Osztromok | Generated with Claude

COOKING SKILLS: RICE 1

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Cooking Skills: Rice 1

Chapter 1 · Know Your Rice

SKILL GOAL

Choose the right rice for a dish, and handle it properly before it ever reaches the pan.

Shopping list for this chapter

The basics

There are thousands of kinds of rice, but a cook only needs to understand one idea: **starch**. Rice is mostly starch, in two forms. Long, slender grains (basmati, long-grain) are rich in the form that stays firm, so they cook into separate, fluffy grains. Short, round grains (sushi, risotto, pudding rice) are rich in the form that turns soft and sticky, so they cook into clumps or a creamy mass. Choosing the right rice is more than half the battle: no technique makes basmati sticky enough for sushi.

RICE	GRAIN AND FEEL	COOKS UP	BEST FOR
Long-grain white	Slim, firm	Separate, fluffy	Everyday side dish, curries, salads, fried rice
Basmati	Extra long, slender, fragrant	Separate, light, delicate	Curries, pilaf, biryani
Jasmine	Long, soft, floral	Slightly clingy, soft	Thai and Chinese food, stir-fries, rice bowls
Short-grain (sushi-style)	Short, plump	Sticky, holds together	Sushi, rice balls, rice bowls
Risotto (arborio, carnaroli)	Short, fat, starchy	Creamy outside, firm centre	Risotto, chapter 7
Pudding rice	Short, round, very starchy	Soft, creamy, falls apart	Rice pudding, chapter 8

RICE	GRAIN AND FEEL	COOKS UP	BEST FOR
Brown rice	Whole grain with the bran left on	Chewy, nutty, takes longer	Healthy everyday rice, chapter 4

"Wild rice" is not rice at all but the seed of a water grass, which is why it behaves differently (chapter 4).

Handling rice properly

- **Rinse it.** Dry rice is coated in loose surface starch, which turns the water gluey. Swirl the rice in a bowl or sieve under cold water until the water runs nearly clear. Rinse more for fluffy, separate grains (basmati, jasmine); skip it for risotto and puddings, where you want that starch.
- **Soak it (sometimes).** Half an hour in cold water lets long, delicate grains such as basmati absorb water gently, so they cook faster and break less.
- **Measure it.** Don't guess. About 75 g dry per main-meal portion, 50 to 60 g as a side.
- **Store dry rice** in an airtight container in a cool, dry place; it keeps for a year or more. **Cooked rice** needs more care, and has its own safety rules in chapter 2.

Try it

LEVEL 1 · START HERE

Plain boiled long-grain rice (your baseline)

20 minutes | 1 portion | the one to compare everything with

Every experiment in this course needs something to compare against. This is it: the plainest way to cook ordinary rice. Make it carefully and remember how it tasted.

INGREDIENTS (1 PORTION)

75 g	long-grain white rice
1 litre	water
½ tsp	salt

1. Bring the water and salt to the boil in a medium pan.
2. Tip in the rice, stir once to stop it sticking to the base, and let it return to a steady simmer.
3. Cook **uncovered for 10 to 12 minutes**. Scoop out a few grains at 10 minutes, let them cool for a moment and bite one: it should be tender with the faintest firmness in the middle.
4. Drain in a sieve, then tip it back into the warm pan, cover and leave for 2 minutes so the steam dries the grains.
5. Fluff with a fork (not a spoon, which mashes the grains) and taste it plain, before adding anything.

> **HOW MUCH RICE?**
>
> 75 g dry rice per person is a good main-meal portion (it makes about 200 g cooked, nearly three times the weight). Use 50 to 60 g if it is a side dish, or if you are serving it with a lot of vegetables.

LEVEL 2 · TASTE AND COMPARE

The rice-type tasting plate

35 minutes | 1 plate, 5 tastes | needs five small pans

Five common rices, each cooked the same plain way, then lined up on one plate so you can see and taste exactly how they differ. Buy the smallest bag of each: you will use them all through this course.

INGREDIENTS (1 PORTION)

30 g	long-grain white rice
30 g	basmati rice
30 g	jasmine rice
30 g	short-grain rice (sushi rice or similar)
30 g	pudding rice
2 litres	water, split between the pans (about 400 ml each)
1 pinch	salt per pan

1. Label five saucers or a plate in sections. Put **400 ml of water and a pinch of salt** into each of five small pans (or cook in two rounds if you only have two or three pans).
2. Bring each to the boil and add the 30 g of rice. Stir once, then simmer uncovered for the time in the table below, starting a timer for each.
3. Drain each in turn in a sieve, steam dry for a minute, then spoon onto its own part of the plate.
4. Look first: grain length, whether the grains are separate or clumped. Smell. Then taste each, with a sip of water in between.
5. Press a forkful of each against the side of the plate to see how sticky it is. Write it all in the tasting-notes table.

COOKING TIMES

RICE	DRY WEIGHT	SIMMER FOR
Long-grain white	30 g	10 to 12 min
Basmati	30 g	8 to 10 min

RICE	DRY WEIGHT	SIMMER FOR
Jasmine	30 g	9 to 10 min
Short-grain (sushi-style)	30 g	12 to 14 min
Pudding rice	30 g	15 to 20 min

LEVEL 3 · USE IT

Easy rice supper: rice, peas and a fried egg

25 minutes | 1 portion | healthy, cheap and quick

Rice on its own is a base, not a meal. This is the simplest way to turn the baseline rice into supper, and the start of the rice bowls you will build in chapter 9.

INGREDIENTS (1 PORTION)

75 g	long-grain white rice, boiled as in the baseline recipe
80 g	frozen peas
1	medium egg
1 tsp	vegetable or rapeseed oil
1 tsp	reduced-salt soy sauce
1	spring onion, sliced

1. Cook the rice as in the baseline recipe. Add the frozen peas to the pan for the **last 3 minutes**, then drain everything together.
2. While the rice drains, heat the oil in a small frying pan over a medium heat and fry the egg until the white is set and the edges are crisp (see Cooking Skills: Eggs 1, chapter 3, if you want a reminder).
3. Pile the rice and peas into a bowl, drizzle with the soy sauce, slide the egg on top and scatter over the spring onion.

Experiments

EXPERIMENT

Rinsed or unrinsed

How much does rinsing really change the result?

1. Take two lots of 75 g jasmine or long-grain rice. Rinse one in a sieve under cold water until it runs nearly clear, and leave the other as it comes.
2. Cook both in the same size of pan, with the same water and time as the baseline recipe.
3. Look at the cooking water, then at the cooked grains, then taste.

Look for: Cloudier cooking water and slightly clumpier grains from the unrinsed rice. Decide which you prefer for everyday rice.

EXPERIMENT

Soaked or not

Does half an hour in water make a difference?

1. Soak 75 g basmati in cold water for 30 minutes; keep another 75 g dry.
2. Rinse both quickly, then boil the soaked rice for 6 to 7 minutes and the dry rice for 9 to 10 minutes. Taste a grain from each a minute before.
3. Compare how many grains snapped in half, and how long each grain is.

Look for: The soaked rice cooks faster and tends to stay longer and less broken. If you can't taste the difference, you can skip soaking.

EXPERIMENT

The fork test

A quick way to see why the rice type matters.

1. Use the cooked rices from the tasting plate while they are still warm.
2. Spoon each into a small cup or ramekin, press down lightly, then tip it out onto the plate.
3. Pick up a few grains of each with a fork.

Look for: Which ones hold their shape (short-grain, pudding rice) and which fall apart (basmati, long-grain). That is exactly why you pick sushi rice for sushi and basmati for a curry.

Tasting notes

WHAT I TRIED	METHOD OR AMOUNT	WHAT I SAW	WHAT I THOUGHT	WILL I DO IT AGAIN?
Baseline long-grain				
Basmati				
Jasmine				
Short-grain				
Pudding rice				
Rinsed vs unrinsed				
Soaked vs not soaked				

Troubleshooting

PROBLEM	LIKELY CAUSE	WHAT TO DO
Rice is gluey and clumped	Too much surface starch, too little water, or over-stirring	Rinse first, use plenty of water, and stir only once

PROBLEM	LIKELY CAUSE	WHAT TO DO
Hard, chalky centres	Not cooked long enough	Cook a minute or two longer and test a grain by biting it
Mushy, broken grains	Cooked too long, or a soft rice used where a firm one was needed	Test early; choose basmati or long-grain for separate grains
Rice sticks to the pan	Not stirred at the start, or the heat was too high	Stir once after adding the rice and keep a steady simmer
Bland rice	No salt in the water	Add a pinch of salt (about ½ tsp per litre)

FOOD SAFETY: COOKED RICE

Uncooked rice can carry spores of a bacterium (Bacillus cereus) that survive cooking. They only cause trouble if cooked rice sits warm for hours. The golden rule: **don't leave cooked rice out**. Full storage and reheating rules are in chapter 2.

CHECKPOINT: CAN YOU DO THIS NOW?

- ☐ I can name the main kinds of rice and what each is used for.
- ☐ I know why long-grain rice is fluffy and sushi rice is sticky.
- ☐ I can measure a sensible portion of dry rice.
- ☐ I know when to rinse rice and when not to.
- ☐ I have a baseline bowl of boiled rice to compare everything else with.

NEXT CHAPTER

Cooking Skills: Rice 1, chapter 2 is Boiling Rice: the pasta method of lots of water and a drain, with four boiled rices and the rules for cooling and storing cooked rice safely.

Cooking Skills: Rice 1

Chapter 2 · Boiling Rice

SKILL GOAL

Boil rice in plenty of water so it comes out tender and separate, and store the leftovers safely.

Shopping list for this chapter

The basics

Boiling rice is the same as boiling pasta: plenty of boiling water, the rice cooked until just tender, then drained. It is the most forgiving method, because the large amount of water dilutes the starch that makes rice gluey, and because you can taste a grain and drain at exactly the right moment. The one catch is that boiling takes away a little flavour, so season the water.

STEP	WHAT TO DO	WHY
Rinse	Under cold water in a sieve	Removes loose surface starch
Big pan, plenty of water	About 750 ml to 1 litre for 75 g of rice	Dilutes the starch, so grains stay separate
Salt the water	About ½ tsp per litre	Seasons the grains from inside
Simmer, uncovered	Set a timer, test a grain	You choose exactly when it is done
Drain and steam	Return to the warm pan, covered, for 5 minutes	Evens out the moisture, gives fluffy rice

Try it

LEVEL 1 · START HERE

Boiled long-grain rice, done properly

20 minutes | 1 portion | the pasta method

Boil the rice in plenty of water, drain it, then let it steam. The extra water carries the loose starch away, which is why this method is so forgiving.

INGREDIENTS (1 PORTION)

75 g	long-grain white rice
1 litre	water
½ tsp	salt

1. Bring the water and salt to a rolling boil in a medium pan. Rinse the rice in a sieve under cold water for about 30 seconds.
2. Add the rice, stir once, and simmer uncovered. Set a timer for **10 minutes**.
3. At 10 minutes, bite a grain. If there is still a hard white core, give it 1 more minute and test again.
4. Drain through the sieve, shake off the water, and tip the rice back into the warm, dry pan.
5. Cover with a lid (or a clean tea towel under the lid) and leave it off the heat for **5 minutes** to steam. Fluff with a fork.

> **WHY THE STEAM STEP MATTERS**
>
> Straight out of the sieve the grains are wet on the outside and firm inside. Five minutes in the covered pan lets the moisture spread evenly, so the grains finish tender and dry instead of soggy.

LEVEL 2 · A DELICATE RICE

Boiled basmati

15 minutes, plus 20 minutes soaking | 1 portion | long, separate grains

Basmati grains are long and fragile, so they get gentler treatment: rinse, soak, then a shorter boil.

INGREDIENTS (1 PORTION)

75 g	basmati rice
750 ml	water
½ tsp	salt
2	cardamom pods, lightly crushed (optional)
1	bay leaf (optional)

1. Put the rice in a bowl, cover with cold water, swirl, and pour the cloudy water off. Repeat 3 or 4 times until it runs nearly clear. Cover with fresh water and soak for **20 minutes**, then drain.
2. Bring the water, salt, cardamom and bay leaf (if using) to the boil. Add the drained rice and stir once.
3. Simmer for **5 to 7 minutes** (8 to 10 if you didn't soak). Test a grain at 5 minutes.
4. Drain, remove the whole spices, return the rice to the pan, cover and steam for 5 minutes. Fluff gently with a fork.

LEVEL 2 · A FINISH

Jasmine rice with soy and spring onion

20 minutes | 1 portion | a quick flavour boost

Jasmine rice is soft and fragrant, and plain boiled rice becomes something special with a simple finish.

INGREDIENTS (1 PORTION)

75 g	jasmine rice
750 ml	water
1 pinch	salt
1	spring onion, finely sliced
1 tsp	reduced-salt soy sauce
½ tsp	toasted sesame oil
1 tsp	sesame seeds (optional)

1. Rinse the rice well, then boil it in the salted water for **9 to 10 minutes**, until tender but not mushy.
2. Drain, return to the warm pan, cover, and steam for 5 minutes.
3. Toss the rice with the soy sauce and sesame oil, then fold through the spring onion.
4. Serve scattered with sesame seeds, alongside a fried egg, tofu or any grilled fish or chicken.

LEVEL 3 · PLAN AHEAD

Fried-rice-ready rice (cooked and cooled safely)

25 minutes, plus cooling | 2 portions | for chapter 6

The best fried rice is made from cold, dry rice, so cook it ahead. This recipe is all about cooling it fast enough to keep it safe.

INGREDIENTS (2 PORTIONS)

100 g	long-grain or basmati rice (enough for 2 portions)
1 litre	water
½ tsp	salt

1. Rinse the rice and boil it in the salted water for **9 minutes**, slightly firmer than you'd eat it. It will firm up further as it cools.
2. Drain well. Spread the rice in a thin layer on a clean baking tray or large plate so the steam escapes and it cools quickly.
3. Leave for no more than **30 minutes**, until no longer steaming. Then spoon it into an airtight container, seal it and put it in the fridge, **within 1 hour** of cooking.
4. Use it within **24 hours**. Write the time you cooked it on the lid.

> **REHEATING**
>
> Only reheat rice once, and make sure it is steaming hot all the way through. Never reheat it a second time.

Experiments

EXPERIMENT

How much water?

Does a big pan of water really matter?

1. Cook three lots of 75 g rinsed long-grain rice in 500 ml, 1 litre and 2 litres of salted boiling water, all for 10 minutes.
2. Drain and steam each as in the main recipe.
3. Compare how sticky each is and how easy it was to cook.

Look for: The smaller pan may stick, boil dry, or clump. A bigger pan is easier. Find the amount that suits your pans.

EXPERIMENT

8, 10 or 12 minutes

Learn what undercooked, perfect and overcooked rice are like.

1. Boil 100 g of rinsed long-grain rice in 1 litre of water.
2. At 8 minutes, spoon out a third into a sieve. At 10 minutes, spoon out another third. At 12 minutes, drain the rest.
3. Steam each portion for a few minutes, then taste them in order.

Look for: The 8-minute rice has a firm core, the 12-minute rice is soft and starting to split, and one of them will be your favourite.

EXPERIMENT

Steamed or rinsed

Two ways to finish boiled rice.

1. Boil two lots of rice the same way. Drain both.
2. Return one to the warm pan to steam for 5 minutes. Rinse the other under cold water until it is cool, and drain well.
3. Taste both, the steamed one warm and the rinsed one as it is, then reheat the rinsed rice with a splash of hot water.

Look for: The rinsed rice is cleaner and less sticky but cool, which is useful for salads and fried rice. The steamed rice is hotter, more flavourful and better for serving straight away.

Tasting notes

WHAT I TRIED	METHOD OR AMOUNT	WHAT I SAW	WHAT I THOUGHT	WILL I DO IT AGAIN?
Boiled long-grain				
Boiled basmati				
Jasmine with soy				
Fried-rice-ready rice				
500 ml vs 1 litre vs 2 litres				
8, 10 and 12 minutes				
Steamed vs rinsed				

Troubleshooting

PROBLEM	LIKELY CAUSE	WHAT TO DO
Rice is gluey	Not rinsed, not enough water, or stirred too much	Rinse, use a bigger pan, stir only once
Core is hard	Drained too early	Taste a grain before draining; cook a minute longer
Grains burst and split	Cooked too long or boiled too hard	Keep a steady simmer and test early
Rice is wet after draining	Skipped the steaming step	Return to the warm pan, cover and wait 5 minutes
Clumped when cold	Normal as rice cools and starch sets	Break up with a fork, or splash with water when reheating

FOOD SAFETY: COOLING AND REHEATING RICE

Rice spores survive cooking, and if cooked rice sits at room temperature they can grow and make toxins that reheating does not destroy. So: **cool it quickly** (spread out, within about 30 minutes to 1 hour); **refrigerate** in a sealed container; **eat within 24 hours**; **reheat only once**, until it is steaming hot right through. If in doubt, throw it out.

CHECKPOINT: CAN YOU DO THIS NOW?

- ☐ I can boil rice by the pasta method and tell when it is done.
- ☐ I know why rinsing and steaming matter.
- ☐ I can cook basmati and jasmine to suit them.
- ☐ I can cool, store and reheat cooked rice safely.
- ☐ I have rice ready for chapter 6.

NEXT CHAPTER

Cooking Skills: Rice 1, chapter 3 is The Absorption Method: measure the rice and the water exactly so it all gets absorbed, on the hob, in the oven and in the microwave.

Cooking Skills: Rice 1

Chapter 3 · The Absorption Method

SKILL GOAL

Measure the rice and the water so that the rice absorbs every drop and finishes fluffy.

Shopping list for this chapter

The basics

In the absorption method there is no draining: you measure exactly the water the rice will drink, and cook with the lid on until it is all gone. Everything stays in the pan, which means more flavour (and more starch, so a slightly softer, stickier result than boiling). The cooking is done by the water's heat at first, then by steam. This is the way most people in Asia cook rice every day, usually in a rice cooker.

The whole method rests on **four rules**:

1. **Measure by volume.** One jug or mug for the rice, the same one for the water.
2. **Lid on, tightly.** The steam is doing the cooking.
3. **Don't stir or peek.** Stirring breaks the grains and releases starch; lifting the lid lets the steam out.
4. **Rest at the end.** Ten minutes, lid still on, lets the moisture spread evenly through the rice.

RICE	RICE : WATER (BY VOLUME)	NOTES
Long-grain white	1 : 1.75 to 1 : 2	Start at 1 : 2, then try less
Basmati	1 : 1.5	Rinse; a soak lets you use a little less
Jasmine	1 : 1.25 to 1 : 1.5	Soft and clingy; easy to overdo
Short-grain (sushi)	1 : 1.2	Rinse well; rest before serving
Brown rice	1 : 2.25	More water, much longer (chapter 4)

Try it

LEVEL 1 · START HERE

Stovetop absorption rice (1 to 2)

25 minutes | 1 portion | the classic ratio

No draining: you measure the water so that the rice drinks every drop. Measure by volume with the same jug for both, because the ratio, not the weight, is what matters.

INGREDIENTS (1 PORTION)

100 ml	long-grain white rice (about 80 g), measured in a jug
200 ml	cold water
1 pinch	salt

1. Rinse the rice in a sieve until the water runs nearly clear. Drain well.
2. Put the rice, water and salt into a small pan with a tight-fitting lid. Bring to the boil, uncovered, and stir **once**.
3. Turn the heat to its lowest, put the lid on firmly and set a timer for **12 minutes**. Don't lift the lid and don't stir.
4. Take the pan off the heat and leave it, still covered, for **10 minutes**. The rice finishes cooking in the trapped steam.
5. Lift the lid, fluff with a fork and taste.

> **PICK THE RIGHT PAN**
>
> Use a small, heavy pan with a lid that fits well. Too wide a pan lets the water spread out thin and evaporate before the rice has cooked.

LEVEL 2 · HANDS OFF

Oven-baked rice

35 minutes | 2 portions | no watching the pan

A great method when the hob is busy, or for a bigger batch: the oven gives gentle, even heat all round the dish, so there is nothing to burn on the bottom.

INGREDIENTS (2 PORTIONS)

200 ml	long-grain white rice (about 165 g), measured in a jug
400 ml	boiling water from the kettle
½ tsp	salt
1 tsp	butter or oil (optional)

1. Heat the oven to 180°C fan (200°C conventional, gas 6).
2. Rinse the rice and put it in an ovenproof dish with a lid (or a dish you can cover tightly with foil). Add the salt and butter.
3. Pour over the **boiling** water and stir once. Cover with the lid or foil, sealed round the edges.
4. Bake for **25 minutes**. Take out, leave covered for 5 minutes, then fluff with a fork.

LEVEL 2 · QUICK AND EASY

Microwave rice

20 minutes | 1 portion | one bowl

Microwave powers vary a lot, so treat these times as a starting point and write down what works for yours.

INGREDIENTS (1 PORTION)

100 ml	long-grain white rice (about 80 g)
225 ml	boiling water
1 pinch	salt

1. Rinse the rice, then put it in a large microwave-safe bowl (a big one, so the water can bubble up without boiling over). Add the salt and the boiling water.
2. Cover loosely with a plate or microwave lid. Cook on high (800 W) for **5 minutes**, then on medium (about half power) for **8 minutes**.
3. Leave it covered for 5 minutes. Fluff with a fork.
4. If the rice is still firm and the water has gone, sprinkle over 2 tablespoons of hot water, cover and microwave for another minute.

LEVEL 3 · RICE-COOKER STYLE

Soaked rice in a covered pan (1 to 1.5)

20 minutes, plus 20 minutes soaking | 1 portion | how a rice cooker works

A rice cooker simply soaks, boils, then keeps the lid on. You can copy that in a pan. Because soaked rice has already absorbed some water, it needs less.

INGREDIENTS (1 PORTION)

100 ml	jasmine or long-grain rice (about 80 g)
150 ml	cold water
1 pinch	salt

1. Rinse the rice and soak it in cold water for **20 minutes**. Drain thoroughly.
2. Put the rice, the 150 ml of water and the salt in a small pan. Bring to a boil, then turn to the lowest heat.
3. Cover and cook for **10 minutes** without lifting the lid.
4. Turn off the heat and leave for **10 minutes**. Fluff and serve.

> **A TEA TOWEL FOR THE LID**
>
> If steam escapes round your lid, wrap a clean tea towel over the pan before putting the lid on (keep the loose ends away from the heat). It catches condensation that would drip back into the rice.

Experiments

EXPERIMENT

Three ratios

Find the best amount of water for your pan.

1. Use three identical small pans (or cook in three rounds). In each, put 100 ml of rinsed long-grain rice.
2. Add 150 ml, 175 ml and 200 ml of water (ratios 1 : 1.5, 1 : 1.75 and 1 : 2). Cook all by the stovetop method.
3. Taste and compare. Write down which ratio gave you the best rice in your pan.

Look for: The 1 : 1.5 rice may be firm or even crunchy, the 1 : 2 rice may be soft and sticky. Your pan and lid decide the winner.

EXPERIMENT

Lid on or lid ajar

How much does a tight lid matter?

1. Make two small pans of the stovetop rice, both with 100 ml of rice and 200 ml of water.
2. Cook one with the lid on firmly, and the other with the lid tilted, leaving a gap.
3. Look at the water level after 12 minutes.

Look for: The ajar pan loses steam, so its water vanishes early and the rice stays hard on top. Now you know why the lid must fit.

EXPERIMENT

Rest or no rest

Is the 10-minute rest worth the wait?

1. Make two identical pans of stovetop rice.
2. Lift the lid of one as soon as the timer rings and fluff the rice. Leave the other covered, off the heat, for 10 minutes.
3. Taste both.

Look for: The rested rice is usually more even, with less wet rice at the bottom and dry rice on top.

Tasting notes

WHAT I TRIED	METHOD OR AMOUNT	WHAT I SAW	WHAT I THOUGHT	WILL I DO IT AGAIN?
Stovetop 1 to 2				
Oven-baked rice				
Microwave rice				
Soaked rice-cooker style				
Three ratios				
Lid on vs ajar				
Rest vs no rest				

Troubleshooting

PROBLEM	LIKELY CAUSE	WHAT TO DO
Hard or crunchy rice, pan dry	Too little water, or steam escaped	Add 2 tablespoons hot water, cover and cook 3 more minutes; use more water next time
Soggy, wet rice	Too much water	Drain off any extra, then cover for 5 minutes; use less water next time
Burnt layer on the base	Heat too high or pan too thin	Use the lowest heat, a heavy pan, and a heat-diffuser if you have one
Gluey, sticky rice	Not rinsed, or stirred	Rinse, and leave the pan alone
Wet on top, hard underneath	Skipped the rest	Rest 10 minutes covered before fluffing

FOOD SAFETY: COOKED RICE

Same rules as chapter 2: cool leftover rice within 1 hour, keep it in the fridge and eat it within 24 hours, and reheat only once until steaming hot right through. Rice kept warm in a pan or rice cooker for hours is the classic cause of rice food poisoning.

CHECKPOINT: CAN YOU DO THIS NOW?

☐ I can cook rice by absorption on the hob.

☐ I know the four rules: measure, lid on, don't stir, rest.

☐ I can cook rice in the oven and in the microwave.

☐ I know my best ratio for long-grain rice in my own pan.

☐ I can choose between boiling and absorption for a recipe.

NEXT CHAPTER

Cooking Skills: Rice 1, chapter 4 is Brown, Wild and Mixed Grains: longer cooks, chewier grains, and healthy everyday alternatives to white rice.

Cooking Skills: Rice 1

Chapter 4 · Brown, Wild and Mixed Grains

SKILL GOAL

Cook wholegrain rice and other grains reliably, allowing for their longer cooking times.

Shopping list for this chapter

The basics

White rice has had its bran and germ removed, which makes it quick to cook, but it removes much of the fibre and some vitamins too. **Brown rice** keeps the bran, so it takes about twice as long, needs more water and has a chewier, nuttier taste. Other grains and seeds (wild rice, quinoa, barley) add colour, texture and variety. They can be swapped into most rice recipes once you know their timing.

GRAIN	TIME (BOILED)	TEXTURE	WATER FOR ABSORPTION
White long-grain	10 to 12 min	Soft, fluffy	1 : 1.75 to 1 : 2
Brown long-grain	25 to 30 min	Chewy, nutty	1 : 2.25
Wild rice blend	25 to 35 min	Chewy, earthy, some grains split	Follow the packet
Quinoa	12 to 15 min	Light, little pops, a short tail	1 : 2
Pearl barley (for interest)	25 to 30 min	Soft, chewy, plump	Boil and drain

The principles are the same as in chapters 2 and 3, with two changes: **more water** and **more time**. The bran is a barrier that the water has to get through, so a soak helps, and if you mix grains with different cooking times you can start the slow one first.

A NOTE ON VARIETY

Rice naturally takes up traces of arsenic from the soil, slightly more in brown rice. The Food Standards Agency advice for most people is simply to eat a varied diet, not to rely on rice every day. Rinsing, and cooking in plenty of water, also helps, so mixing grains is a good habit.

Try it

LEVEL 1 · START HERE

Boiled brown rice

40 minutes | 1 portion | the easy way to brown rice

Brown rice still has its bran, which makes it chewier, nuttier, higher in fibre and slower to cook. Boiling is the most forgiving way to start.

INGREDIENTS (1 PORTION)

75 g	brown long-grain rice
1.5 litres	water
½ tsp	salt

1. Bring the water and salt to the boil in a medium pan. Rinse the rice, then add it and stir once.
2. Simmer uncovered for **25 to 30 minutes**, topping up the water with the kettle if it gets low.
3. At 25 minutes, bite a grain. It should be tender but chewy, not hard. Keep going in 2-minute steps if it is not ready.
4. Drain, return to the warm pan, cover and steam for 5 minutes.

LEVEL 2 · ABSORPTION

Brown rice by absorption

50 minutes | 1 portion | uses the chapter 3 method

Same four rules as chapter 3, but with more water and a much longer time.

INGREDIENTS (1 PORTION)

100 ml	brown long-grain rice (about 85 g), measured in a jug
225 ml	water
1 pinch	salt

1. Rinse the rice and put it with the water and salt in a small pan with a tight lid.
2. Bring to the boil, stir once, then turn the heat to its lowest and cover.
3. Cook for **35 to 40 minutes** without lifting the lid, until the water has gone.
4. Rest, still covered, off the heat for **10 minutes**. Fluff with a fork.

> **COOK EXTRA**
>
> Brown rice takes so long that it is worth cooking a double batch. Cool half quickly, as in chapter 2, and use it within a day for chapter 6.

LEVEL 2 · SOMETHING DIFFERENT

Wild rice blend with herbs

35 to 45 minutes | 1 portion | a good dinner-party side

Wild rice isn't rice at all but the seed of a water grass. It is dark, long and chewy and takes longer than white rice, so it is usually sold mixed with long-grain rice. Check the packet for the time, which varies.

INGREDIENTS (1 PORTION)

75 g	wild rice blend (long-grain and wild rice)
1 litre	water
½ tsp	salt
1 tsp	olive oil
1 tbsp	chopped parsley or chives
1 tsp	lemon juice

1. Bring the water and salt to the boil. Rinse the blend, add it and stir once.
2. Simmer uncovered for the time on the packet, usually **25 to 35 minutes**. The wild grains are ready when many have split open to show their pale insides.
3. Drain well, return to the pan, cover and steam for 5 minutes.
4. Stir through the oil, lemon juice and herbs. Serve with roast chicken, grilled fish or roasted vegetables.

LEVEL 3 · MIX IT UP

Rice and quinoa mix

30 minutes | 1 portion | extra protein and fibre

Quinoa is a small seed that cooks like a grain, in about the same time as white rice, so the two cook happily together and you get a lighter, more nutritious bowl.

INGREDIENTS (1 PORTION)

50 g	long-grain white rice
30 g	quinoa
180 ml	water
1 pinch	salt
½	vegetable or chicken stock cube (optional)

1. Rinse the quinoa in a fine sieve for 30 seconds (it has a natural coating that tastes bitter), then rinse the rice. Put both in a small pan with the water, salt and crumbled stock cube.
2. Bring to the boil, stir once, then cover and cook on the lowest heat for **12 minutes**.
3. Take off the heat and leave covered for **8 minutes**. Fluff with a fork.
4. Serve with grilled fish or chicken, or as the base of a vegetable bowl.

Experiments

EXPERIMENT

Soaked or unsoaked brown rice

Does a long soak cut the cooking time?

1. Soak 75 g brown rice in cold water for 1 hour (overnight is even better). Keep another 75 g dry.
2. Boil both in the same way, tasting a grain from each every 5 minutes after the 15-minute mark.
3. Note when each is first tender.

Look for: The soaked rice usually cooks several minutes faster. Is the saving worth the planning?

EXPERIMENT

Time to bite

Learn exactly how brown rice changes as it cooks.

1. Boil 100 g of brown rice in 1.5 litres of water.
2. Spoon out a few grains at 20, 25, 30 and 35 minutes. Cool them for a moment and taste each.
3. Write down how each one felt.

Look for: At 20 minutes it's tough, at 35 it's soft. Where is your own sweet spot between chewy and tender?

EXPERIMENT

White and brown, half and half

Cook two rices together without making one mushy.

1. Boil 40 g of brown rice and 40 g of white rice together for 25 minutes. Taste.
2. Then try again: start 40 g brown rice, and add 40 g white rice after 15 minutes. Cook for another 10 minutes.
3. Compare the two batches.

Look for: In the first batch the white rice goes soft and overcooked, in the second both are cooked at the same time. This staggering trick works for any mixture of grains.

Tasting notes

WHAT I TRIED	METHOD OR AMOUNT	WHAT I SAW	WHAT I THOUGHT	WILL I DO IT AGAIN?
Boiled brown rice				
Brown rice by absorption				
Wild rice blend				
Rice and quinoa mix				
Soaked vs unsoaked				
Time to bite				
White and brown half and half				

Troubleshooting

PROBLEM	LIKELY CAUSE	WHAT TO DO
Brown rice still hard after 30 minutes	Old rice, or the boil was too gentle	Keep cooking in 5-minute steps; soak next time

PROBLEM	LIKELY CAUSE	WHAT TO DO
Brown rice gluey	Over-stirred or too much water for absorption	Stir only once; use the 1 : 2.25 ratio and rest
Wild rice tough	Not cooked long enough	Cook until many grains have split open
Quinoa bitter	Not rinsed	Rinse in a fine sieve for 30 seconds
Mixed grains uneven	Different cooking times cooked together	Start the slow grain first and add the quick one later

FOOD SAFETY: COOKED GRAINS

Cooked rice and other cooked grains follow the same rules: cool within 1 hour, refrigerate, eat within 24 hours, and reheat only once until steaming hot.

CHECKPOINT: CAN YOU DO THIS NOW?

- ☐ I can cook brown rice by boiling and by absorption.
- ☐ I know why brown rice needs more water and more time.
- ☐ I can cook a wild rice blend and tell when it's done.
- ☐ I can mix grains and stagger them so they finish together.
- ☐ I know which wholegrain I'll use for everyday meals.

NEXT CHAPTER

Cooking Skills: Rice 1, chapter 5 is Pilaf and Flavoured Rice: toasting the grain and cooking it in flavour, with herb, turmeric, coconut and tomato rice.

Cooking Skills: Rice 1

Chapter 5 · Pilaf and Flavoured Rice

SKILL GOAL

Cook rice in flavour: toast the grain, add hot seasoned liquid, and finish with fresh touches.

Shopping list for this chapter

The basics

A **pilaf** (also called pilau or polo) is rice cooked by absorption with flavour built in. Compared with plain absorption rice there are three extra ideas:

1. **Fry the aromatics first.** Onion, garlic or whole spices cooked in a little fat flavour everything that follows.
2. **Toast the rice.** A minute or two in the fat coats each grain, so it stays separate and develops a nutty taste.
3. **Add hot, flavoured liquid.** Hot stock (or coconut milk) keeps the pan simmering, and it is salty and tasty from the start.

INGREDIENT	WHEN IT GOES IN	WHY
Onion, garlic, whole spices	In the fat, before the rice	Their flavour dissolves in the oil
Ground spices (turmeric, paprika)	With the rice, for under a minute	They burn easily if left in a dry hot pan
Stock or coconut milk	Hot, with the rice	Flavours the grain as it absorbs
Lemon, herbs, spring onion	At the end, after the rest	Heat dulls fresh flavours

Try it

LEVEL 1 · START HERE

Simple onion pilaf

30 minutes | 1 portion | the base for every pilaf

A pilaf starts like absorption rice (chapter 3), with two additions: the rice is fried briefly in fat first, and it cooks in hot, flavoured liquid. Same ratio, far more taste.

INGREDIENTS (1 PORTION)

100 ml	long-grain white rice (about 80 g)
1	small onion, finely chopped
1 tsp	butter
1 tsp	olive or rapeseed oil
200 ml	hot reduced-salt chicken or vegetable stock

1. Heat the butter and oil in a small pan with a lid over a medium-low heat. Add the onion and soften for **5 minutes**, without browning.
2. Rinse the rice and drain it well, then add to the pan. Stir for **1 to 2 minutes** until the grains look glossy and smell slightly nutty.
3. Pour in the hot stock, stir once, bring to the boil, then cover and turn to the lowest heat for **12 minutes**.
4. Leave covered and off the heat for **10 minutes**. Fluff with a fork.

> **MIND THE SALT**
>
> Stock cubes are salty. Use a reduced-salt one, or half a cube, and taste before adding any more salt.

LEVEL 2 · FRESH AND LIGHT

Lemon and herb rice

25 minutes | 1 portion | great with fish or chicken

Delicate flavours such as lemon and fresh herbs go in at the end, so the heat doesn't dull them.

INGREDIENTS (1 PORTION)

100 ml	long-grain white rice (about 80 g)
1 tsp	olive oil
200 ml	hot water
1 pinch	salt
½	lemon, zest and juice
2 tbsp	chopped parsley or dill
1	spring onion, sliced

1. Heat the oil in a small pan, add the rinsed rice and stir for 1 minute. Add the hot water and salt, bring to the boil, cover and cook on the lowest heat for 12 minutes. Rest, covered, for 10 minutes.
2. Fluff the rice with a fork. Stir in the lemon zest, a squeeze of juice, the herbs and the spring onion.
3. Taste, and add more lemon or salt if needed.

LEVEL 2 · SPICED

Turmeric rice

25 minutes | 1 portion | golden and mild

Spices taste best when they are warmed in fat first, which releases their flavour. Turmeric also dyes the rice a cheerful yellow.

INGREDIENTS (1 PORTION)

100 ml	basmati rice (about 80 g)
1 tsp	oil
½ tsp	cumin seeds
1	cardamom pod, lightly crushed
½ tsp	ground turmeric
150 ml	hot water
1 pinch	salt

1. Warm the oil in a small pan over a medium heat. Add the cumin seeds and cardamom and sizzle for **20 seconds**.
2. Stir in the turmeric and the rinsed, drained rice. Stir for 1 minute until coated.
3. Add the hot water and salt, bring to the boil, cover, and cook on the lowest heat for **10 minutes**.
4. Rest, covered, for **10 minutes**. Fluff and remove the cardamom pod before serving.

LEVEL 3 · A TREAT

Coconut rice

25 minutes | 1 portion | creamy and fragrant

Coconut milk replaces half the water. It gives rice a rich flavour without the fat of cream, and goes well with curries, grilled fish or spicy food. Light coconut milk keeps it lighter; full-fat is a treat.

INGREDIENTS (1 PORTION)

100 ml	jasmine rice (about 80 g)
100 ml	light coconut milk
100 ml	water
1 pinch	salt
1	lime wedge, to serve

1. Shake the tin well. Rinse the rice, drain it, and put it in a small pan with the coconut milk, water and salt.
2. Bring to the boil, stir once, cover, and cook on the lowest heat for **12 minutes**. Watch for the base catching: coconut milk catches more easily than water.
3. Rest, covered, for **10 minutes**. Fluff and serve with a lime wedge.

LEVEL 3 · RICH

Tomato rice

30 minutes | 1 portion | good with grilled meat or beans

The tomato purée is fried first to deepen its flavour, then dissolves into the liquid. Because it is concentrated, the stock is cut back slightly.

INGREDIENTS (1 PORTION)

100 ml	long-grain white rice (about 80 g)
1 tsp	oil
½	small onion, finely chopped
1	garlic clove, crushed
1 tbsp	tomato purée
½ tsp	smoked paprika
190 ml	hot reduced-salt stock

1. Heat the oil, soften the onion for 4 minutes, then add the garlic, tomato purée and paprika and fry for **1 minute**.
2. Add the rinsed rice and stir for 1 minute.
3. Pour in the hot stock, stir, bring to the boil, cover, and cook on the lowest heat for **12 minutes**. Rest, covered, for 10 minutes.

Experiments

EXPERIMENT

Toasted or untoasted

What does the frying minute actually do?

1. Make two pans of the simple onion pilaf. In one, stir the rice in the fat for 2 minutes. In the other, add it with the stock without toasting.
2. Cook both in the same way.
3. Compare how separate the grains are, and how they taste.

Look for: The toasted rice should be a little more separate and nutty. If you can't tell, the toast matters less than the hot stock.

EXPERIMENT

Stock or water

How much flavour does stock add?

1. Make the lemon and herb rice twice, once with hot water and once with hot reduced-salt stock.
2. Taste both before adding the lemon and herbs, then again at the end.

Look for: Stock adds depth and saltiness. With plenty of herbs and lemon, water may be all you need.

EXPERIMENT

Spice early or late

Does cooking turmeric in oil change the rice?

1. Make two small pans of turmeric rice. Fry the spices in the oil in one. In the other, cook the rice with plain water and stir the spices in with the hot water.
2. Compare the colour, smell and flavour.

Look for: The oil-fried spices should smell stronger and taste rounder. Raw turmeric can taste dusty.

Tasting notes

WHAT I TRIED	METHOD OR AMOUNT	WHAT I SAW	WHAT I THOUGHT	WILL I DO IT AGAIN?
Onion pilaf				
Lemon and herb rice				
Turmeric rice				
Coconut rice				
Tomato rice				
Toasted vs untoasted				
Stock vs water				
Spice early vs late				

Troubleshooting

PROBLEM	LIKELY CAUSE	WHAT TO DO
Rice is stuck to the base	Heat too high, or coconut milk catching	Lowest heat; use a heavy pan; add a splash of water and steam
Too salty	Strong stock cube plus salt	Use reduced-salt stock and taste before adding salt
Spices taste bitter or burnt	Fried too long or too hot	Keep the heat medium and stir quickly; start again if burnt
Bland rice	Water instead of stock, no aromatics	Add onion or garlic, use stock, finish with lemon or herbs
Mushy grains	Too much liquid, or stirred	Measure carefully and don't stir after the lid goes on

FOOD SAFETY: COOKED RICE

The chapter 2 rules apply to every flavoured rice: cool within 1 hour, fridge, eat within 24 hours, reheat once until steaming hot. Rice cooked with coconut milk or stock spoils just as quickly as plain rice.

CHECKPOINT: CAN YOU DO THIS NOW?

☐ I can fry aromatics and toast rice before adding liquid.

☐ I know why the liquid goes in hot.

☐ I can cook a pilaf with the right amount of liquid.

☐ I know when to add fresh flavours at the end.

☐ I have a flavoured rice I'd make again.

NEXT CHAPTER

Cooking Skills: Rice 1, chapter 6 is Fried Rice: using cold rice and high heat, from egg fried rice to a clear-the-fridge supper.

Cooking Skills: Rice 1

Chapter 6 · Fried Rice

SKILL GOAL

Turn cold, cooked rice into a fast, tasty meal, using high heat and a few ingredients.

Shopping list for this chapter

The basics

The secret of good fried rice is not the sauce but the rice. Freshly cooked rice is soft and wet, and in a pan it clumps and turns to paste. **Cold, day-old rice** has dried and firmed up, so it fries into separate, slightly crisp grains. That makes fried rice the perfect use for the cooled rice you prepared in chapter 2.

The other ingredient is **heat**. A high heat evaporates moisture quickly and gives the grains their toasty taste. Work in small batches (one or two portions), because a crowded pan steams instead of fries.

1. **Prepare everything first.** Once you start, it is done in under 10 minutes.
2. **Cook the egg first** and set it aside, then add it back at the end so it doesn't turn rubbery.
3. **Hard vegetables before soft.** Protein before everything.
4. **Season at the end.** Soy sauce is salty, and it burns if it sits on a hot pan.

FOOD SAFETY: RICE FOR FRYING

Only use rice that was cooled quickly (within 1 hour), kept in the fridge and is less than 24 hours old. Never fry rice that has been left out overnight, however good it looks. Heat the fried rice until it is steaming hot all through, and don't keep and reheat it a second time.

Try it

LEVEL 1 · START HERE

Egg fried rice

15 minutes | 1 portion | the foundation

Cold rice is dry on the outside and stays in separate grains when fried, so the sauce coats them instead of making them mushy. Have everything chopped and measured before the pan gets hot, because it goes fast.

INGREDIENTS (1 PORTION)

175 g	cold cooked rice (half of the fried-rice-ready batch from chapter 2)
1	medium egg
2 tsp	vegetable or rapeseed oil
2	spring onions, sliced (keep the green tops apart)
3 tbsp	frozen peas
1 tsp	reduced-salt soy sauce
1 pinch	white or black pepper

1. Break up any lumps in the cold rice with your fingers. Beat the egg in a small bowl.
2. Heat **1 tsp of the oil** in a large frying pan or wok over a high heat. Add the egg, swirl, and stir for 20 seconds until just set. Tip it onto a plate.
3. Add the remaining oil and the white parts of the spring onions. Stir for 15 seconds, then add the rice and peas.
4. Fry for **3 to 4 minutes**, pressing and tossing, until the rice is steaming hot all the way through.
5. Return the egg, add the soy sauce, pepper and the green onion tops, and toss for 30 seconds. Serve at once.

> **STEAMING HOT ALL THE WAY THROUGH**
>
> Rice that was cooled and stored must be heated until it is steaming hot right through. Break open a lump to check. The high heat does this for you, but don't rush it.

LEVEL 2 · HEALTHY

Vegetable fried rice

20 minutes | 1 portion | mostly vegetables

Cut the vegetables small and evenly, so they cook in the same time as the rice takes to heat. Hard vegetables go in first.

INGREDIENTS (1 PORTION)

175 g	cold cooked rice
1	medium egg
2 tsp	oil
1	garlic clove, finely chopped
1 tsp	grated fresh ginger
½	small carrot, finely diced
½	red pepper, finely diced
50 g	mushrooms or beansprouts
1 tsp	reduced-salt soy sauce
½ tsp	toasted sesame oil

1. Scramble the egg in 1 tsp oil as in the egg fried rice, and set aside.
2. Heat the other tsp of oil over a high heat. Stir-fry the carrot for 1 minute, then add the pepper and mushrooms for 1 minute more.
3. Add the garlic and ginger for 15 seconds, then the rice. Fry for **3 to 4 minutes** until steaming hot throughout.
4. Return the egg, add the soy sauce and sesame oil, and toss. (If using beansprouts, add them in the last minute so they stay crisp.)

LEVEL 3 · A MEAL IN A PAN

Chicken and vegetable fried rice

25 minutes | 1 portion | complete supper

Chicken must be cooked through before the rice goes in. Cut it small and thin so it cooks quickly.

INGREDIENTS (1 PORTION)

175 g	cold cooked rice
80 g	chicken breast, cut into small thin pieces
1 tsp	reduced-salt soy sauce, plus 1 tsp for the end
1	medium egg
2 tsp	oil
1	garlic clove, chopped
100 g	mixed vegetables (peppers, sweetcorn, peas, spring onion)

1. Toss the chicken with 1 tsp soy sauce. Scramble the egg in 1 tsp oil and set it aside.
2. Heat the remaining oil over a high heat and stir-fry the chicken for **4 to 5 minutes**, until golden and no pink remains.
3. Add the garlic and vegetables and stir-fry for 2 minutes. Add the rice and fry for 3 to 4 minutes, until steaming hot.
4. Return the egg, add 1 tsp soy sauce and toss. Check a piece of the thickest chicken: it should be white all through.

LEVEL 3 · IMPROVISE

Clear-the-fridge fried rice

20 minutes | 1 portion | your own recipe

Once you know the pattern you never need a recipe. Pick one item from each row of the table, and follow the order.

INGREDIENTS (1 PORTION)

175 g cold cooked rice

2 tsp oil

100 g whatever protein is in the fridge, cooked and diced (ham, leftover chicken, prawns, tofu)

100 g any vegetables, finely chopped (or frozen)

1 tsp reduced-salt soy sauce or other sauce

1. Chop everything small. Heat the oil in a large pan over a high heat.
2. Fry any raw protein first until cooked through. Add hard vegetables, then soft ones.
3. Add the cold rice and fry until steaming hot throughout. Add any already-cooked protein for the last minute.
4. Season with the soy sauce, taste, and write down what you used for your house recipes in chapter 9.

THE FRIED RICE FORMULA

CHOOSE	IDEAS	GOES IN
Fat	1 to 2 tsp rapeseed, vegetable or sesame oil	First, in a hot pan
Protein	Egg, chicken, prawns, tofu, ham, leftover roast chicken	Early, if raw; late, if already cooked
Hard vegetables	Carrot, pepper, onion, broccoli florets (small)	After the protein
Soft vegetables	Peas, sweetcorn, spinach, spring onion, beansprouts	With or just after the rice

CHOOSE	IDEAS	GOES IN
Flavour	Garlic, ginger, chilli, soy sauce, a few drops of sesame oil	Garlic early, sauces at the end
Cold rice	175 g per portion, lumps broken up	After the vegetables

Experiments

EXPERIMENT

Fresh or day-old rice

Prove the secret for yourself.

1. Cook a small batch of rice. Fry 175 g of it straight away, still warm, in the egg fried rice recipe.
2. Fry 175 g of the properly cooled, day-old rice in the same way.
3. Compare the textures.

Look for: The fresh rice sticks and clumps, the day-old rice stays in separate grains. This is the one experiment worth doing.

EXPERIMENT

Wok or frying pan

Does the equipment matter?

1. Make egg fried rice twice, once in a wok (or deep pan) and once in a flat frying pan.
2. Try to use the same heat and the same time.

Look for: A wide, shallow pan can work just as well if it is big enough not to crowd the rice. Heat is more important than shape.

EXPERIMENT

How much oil

How little oil can you get away with?

1. Fry 175 g of cold rice three times, using 1 tsp, 2 tsp and 1 tablespoon of oil.
2. Compare how much sticks, how the grains look and how greasy each feels.

Look for: Too little oil sticks, too much is greasy. Find the lowest amount that works in your pan.

Tasting notes

WHAT I TRIED	METHOD OR AMOUNT	WHAT I SAW	WHAT I THOUGHT	WILL I DO IT AGAIN?
Egg fried rice				
Vegetable fried rice				
Chicken and vegetable fried rice				
Clear-the-fridge fried rice				
Fresh vs day-old rice				
Wok vs frying pan				
1 tsp, 2 tsp, 1 tbsp oil				

Troubleshooting

PROBLEM	LIKELY CAUSE	WHAT TO DO
Mushy, clumped rice	Warm or fresh rice, or an overloaded pan	Use cold, day-old rice and cook smaller batches
Rice sticks to the pan	Too little oil, or the pan wasn't hot	Heat the pan first; add a little more oil
Pale, flavourless	Heat too low, or no seasoning	Turn up the heat; season at the end

PROBLEM	LIKELY CAUSE	WHAT TO DO
Rubbery egg	Egg cooked with the rice	Scramble first, set aside, and fold in at the end
Soggy vegetables	Cut too big or added too early	Cut small; add soft vegetables near the end
Burnt garlic	Added too early to a very hot pan	Add the garlic only seconds before the rice

CHECKPOINT: CAN YOU DO THIS NOW?

- ☐ I can cool, store and use cooked rice safely for frying.
- ☐ I know why cold rice and high heat work.
- ☐ I can cook egg fried rice in under 15 minutes.
- ☐ I can make fried rice from whatever is in the fridge.
- ☐ I know how to tell fried rice is hot enough all the way through.

NEXT CHAPTER

Cooking Skills: Rice 1, chapter 7 is Risotto: creamy rice made by adding hot stock gradually, with parmesan, mushroom, spring vegetable and oven-baked versions.

Cooking Skills: Rice 1

Chapter 7 · Risotto

SKILL GOAL

Make a creamy risotto by adding hot stock gradually and finishing it off the heat.

Shopping list for this chapter

The basics

Risotto is a method, not a particular dish. It needs **short, fat, starchy rice** (arborio or carnaroli), which releases a creamy starch while the centre stays firm. Add the hot stock in stages and keep the rice moving, and the stirring rubs starch off the grains and into the liquid. The result should be loose and creamy, not stiff, with grains that are tender and still have a little bite (*al dente*).

STEP	WHAT TO DO	WHY
Hot stock	Keep it simmering beside the pan	Cold stock stops the cooking and slows the starch release
Soften the onion	5 minutes in oil and butter, no browning	Sweet base without bitterness
Toast the rice (*tostatura*)	1 to 2 minutes, stirring	Seals the outside of the grains, so they hold their shape
Add stock gradually	A ladle at a time, stir until nearly absorbed	Keeps the starch moving, builds creaminess
Finish off the heat (*mantecatura*)	Beat in butter and cheese, then rest 2 minutes	Makes it glossy and creamy

Wine is traditional in risotto, but it is optional: stock with a squeeze of lemon at the end gives the same sharpness.

Try it

LEVEL 1 · START HERE

Basic parmesan risotto

30 minutes | 1 portion | no wine needed

Risotto is made by adding hot stock a ladle at a time. The rice releases its starch as it rubs against the grains, and the stock turns it into a creamy sauce. Do not rinse the rice.

INGREDIENTS (1 PORTION)

75 g	risotto rice (arborio or carnaroli)
350 ml	hot reduced-salt chicken or vegetable stock (in a pan on a low heat)
½	small onion, very finely chopped
1 tsp	olive oil
1 tsp	butter
20 g	parmesan, finely grated
1 pinch	black pepper

1. Keep the stock hot in a pan beside you, with a ladle.
2. Heat the oil and half the butter in a medium pan over a medium-low heat. Soften the onion for **5 minutes** without browning.
3. Add the rice and stir for **1 to 2 minutes** until the grains look glossy and slightly translucent at the edges.
4. Add a ladleful of stock (about 75 ml) and stir until it has nearly all been absorbed. Repeat, a ladle at a time, for **16 to 18 minutes**, stirring often, until the rice is creamy and tender with a very slight bite.
5. Take off the heat. Beat in the remaining butter and the parmesan, add pepper, put the lid on and leave for **2 minutes**. It should flow slowly across a plate: add a splash of stock if it is stiff.

> **THE WAVE TEST**
>
> Drag a spoon across the pan. A good risotto closes slowly behind it. If it's stiff it needs more stock, and if it's soupy cook it another minute.

LEVEL 2 · EARTHY

Mushroom risotto

35 minutes | 1 portion | rich and savoury

Mushrooms hold a lot of water. Cook them hard first, in a dry-ish pan, so they brown instead of stewing.

INGREDIENTS (1 PORTION)

75 g	risotto rice
400 ml	hot reduced-salt vegetable stock
150 g	mushrooms, sliced
1 tsp	olive oil
1 tsp	butter
½	small onion, finely chopped
1	garlic clove, crushed
2	thyme sprigs, leaves only
15 g	parmesan, finely grated
1 tbsp	chopped parsley

1. Heat the oil in a frying pan over a high heat and fry the mushrooms for **5 minutes**, without stirring too much, until golden. Add the garlic and thyme for 30 seconds. Tip out onto a plate.
2. In the risotto pan, soften the onion in the butter for 5 minutes. Add the rice and stir for 1 to 2 minutes.
3. Add the hot stock a ladle at a time, as in the basic risotto, for **16 to 18 minutes**.
4. Stir in the mushrooms for the last 2 minutes. Off the heat, stir in the parmesan and parsley and rest for 2 minutes.

LEVEL 2 · FRESH

Spring vegetable and pea risotto

35 minutes | 1 portion | light and green

Lemon and fresh vegetables lighten risotto. The vegetables go in at the end so they keep their colour and bite.

INGREDIENTS (1 PORTION)

75 g	risotto rice
400 ml	hot reduced-salt vegetable stock
½	small onion, finely chopped
1 tsp	olive oil
1 tsp	butter
60 g	frozen peas
60 g	asparagus tips, green beans or courgette, chopped small
½	lemon, zest and a squeeze of juice
1 tbsp	chopped mint or parsley
15 g	parmesan (optional)

1. Make the risotto base as in the basic recipe: soften the onion in the oil and half the butter, toast the rice, then add hot stock a ladle at a time.
2. After about **12 minutes**, stir in the chopped vegetables. Add the peas for the last **3 minutes**.
3. When the rice is creamy and tender (16 to 18 minutes in all), take it off the heat. Stir in the remaining butter, the lemon zest and juice, the herbs and the parmesan if using. Rest for 2 minutes.

LEVEL 3 · HANDS OFF

Baked risotto

45 minutes | 2 portions | no stirring

The oven does the work: the covered dish traps the steam and the rice absorbs the stock steadily. The result is slightly less creamy than the stirred kind, but you can walk away.

INGREDIENTS (2 PORTIONS)

150 g	risotto rice
500 ml	hot reduced-salt stock
1	small onion, finely chopped
1 tbsp	olive oil
1	garlic clove, crushed
100 g	frozen peas or chopped spinach
30 g	parmesan, finely grated
1 pinch	black pepper

1. Heat the oven to 180°C fan (200°C conventional, gas 6). Heat the oil in an ovenproof pan or casserole with a lid and soften the onion and garlic for 4 minutes.
2. Add the rice and stir for 1 minute. Pour in the hot stock, stir, and bring to a simmer.
3. Cover with the lid (or foil) and bake for **30 minutes**. Stir in the peas or spinach, cover again and bake for **5 to 10 minutes** more, until the rice is tender.
4. Stir in the parmesan and pepper, and leave to rest for 2 minutes. Add a splash of hot water if it looks too thick.

Experiments

EXPERIMENT

Constant or occasional stirring

Does risotto really need constant stirring?

1. Make two basic risottos. Stir one all the time, and the other for 10 seconds after each ladle and every minute or so in between.
2. Taste both when cooked, and compare how creamy and even they are.

Look for: Constant stirring tends to give a creamier result, but occasional stirring can be nearly as good. Decide how much effort it deserves.

EXPERIMENT

Hot stock or cold stock

Why does everyone say hot?

1. Make two basic risottos, adding hot stock to one and cold stock straight from the fridge to the other.
2. Note the time each takes to become tender.

Look for: The cold-stock risotto takes longer and cooks less evenly, because every ladle drops the pan off the boil.

EXPERIMENT

Rest or serve at once

Is the 2-minute rest worth it?

1. Make a basic risotto. Serve half straight away. Cover the rest and leave it for 2 minutes.

Look for: Risotto keeps thickening as it stands. The rested portion is creamier, the first may be looser or slightly grainy.

Tasting notes

WHAT I TRIED	METHOD OR AMOUNT	WHAT I SAW	WHAT I THOUGHT	WILL I DO IT AGAIN?
Basic parmesan risotto				
Mushroom risotto				
Spring vegetable and pea				
Baked risotto				
Constant vs occasional stirring				
Hot vs cold stock				
Rested vs served at once				

Troubleshooting

PROBLEM	LIKELY CAUSE	WHAT TO DO
Gluey or stodgy	Overcooked or too little stock	Take it off the heat earlier; loosen with a splash of hot stock
Hard, chalky centres	Not enough time or stock	Keep adding stock in small amounts until tender
Soupy, watery	Too much stock, or not rested	Boil gently for a minute, or rest it with the lid on
Bland	Weak stock, no seasoning	Use good stock, season at the end, add lemon
Scorched at the bottom	Heat too high	Lower the heat and stir the bottom regularly
Mushrooms rubbery or watery	Cooked at the same time as the rice	Brown them separately first

FOOD SAFETY: LEFTOVER RISOTTO

Risotto is cooked rice, so the chapter 2 rules apply: cool quickly, refrigerate within 1 hour, eat within 24 hours, and reheat only once until steaming hot. Cooked rice that is left on the hob to "keep warm" is the usual cause of rice food poisoning.

CHECKPOINT: CAN YOU DO THIS NOW?

☐ I can make a basic risotto with hot stock added gradually.

☐ I know why risotto rice is different and why I don't rinse it.

☐ I can tell when risotto is the right texture.

☐ I can make a risotto without constant attention (baked).

☐ I know why it needs a rest.

NEXT CHAPTER

Cooking Skills: Rice 1, chapter 8 is Sweet Rice and Rice Puddings: rice cooked in milk and coconut, from stovetop pudding to baked pudding with a skin.

Cooking Skills: Rice 1

Chapter 8 · Sweet Rice and Rice Puddings

SKILL GOAL

Cook rice in milk and coconut to make creamy puddings and sweet rice dishes.

Shopping list for this chapter

The basics

Sweet rice dishes use rice in two ways. In a **pudding** the rice cooks directly in milk, so the starch thickens the liquid into a creamy sauce. In **sweet absorption rice** (coconut rice, for instance) the rice cooks in a measured amount of liquid, so the grains stay separate and are served with fruit. Both are comforting, and both are a good place to practise stirring, heat control and patience.

RICE	USED FOR	WHY
Pudding rice (round, short-grain)	Rice pudding	Very starchy; swells and thickens the milk
Risotto rice	Rice pudding (a good substitute)	Also starchy, a little firmer
Jasmine or sushi rice	Coconut rice, sticky rice dishes	Soft and clingy; hold together
Long-grain rice	Quick porridge from leftovers	Already cooked, so just reheated

Rice puddings are generally a treat, but they can be made lighter: semi-skimmed milk, less sugar, and fruit instead of jam or cream.

Try it

LEVEL 1 · START HERE

Stovetop rice pudding

40 minutes | 1 portion | creamy and comforting

Pudding rice is cooked directly in milk, so the starch thickens the milk as the grains swell. No rinsing: the starch is the point.

INGREDIENTS (1 PORTION)

40 g	pudding rice
300 ml	semi-skimmed milk
1 tbsp	caster sugar
½ tsp	vanilla extract
1 pinch	grated nutmeg

1. Put the rice, milk and sugar in a small, heavy pan. Bring just to a simmer, stirring.
2. Turn the heat to the lowest setting and cook for **30 to 35 minutes**, stirring every couple of minutes so it doesn't catch, until the rice is soft and the milk has thickened to a creamy sauce.
3. Stir in the vanilla. Serve hot with a grating of nutmeg, or a spoonful of fruit.

> **IT THICKENS AS IT COOLS**
>
> Stop cooking when the pudding is slightly looser than you want it. It firms up considerably as it stands.

LEVEL 2 · A TREAT

Coconut rice with mango

30 minutes | 1 portion | a Thai-style dessert

Sweet coconut rice with fruit is cooked by the absorption method from chapter 3, with coconut milk and a little sugar.

INGREDIENTS (1 PORTION)

60 g	jasmine or short-grain rice
120 ml	light coconut milk
60 ml	water
1 tsp	sugar
1 pinch	salt
½	ripe mango, sliced
1	lime wedge

1. Rinse the rice well and soak for 15 minutes if you have time. Drain.
2. Put the rice, coconut milk, water, sugar and salt in a small pan. Bring to the boil, stir once, cover, and cook on the lowest heat for **12 minutes**.
3. Rest, covered, for 10 minutes. Spoon onto a plate with the mango and squeeze over a little lime.

LEVEL 3 · SLOW AND GOLDEN

Baked rice pudding with a skin

2 hours | 2 portions | mostly waiting

The pudding that many people grew up with, with its golden skin. A low oven cooks it slowly and gently, and nothing to stir.

INGREDIENTS (2 PORTIONS)

50 g	pudding rice
500 ml	semi-skimmed milk
1 tbsp	caster sugar
10 g	butter, plus a little for the dish
½ tsp	vanilla extract
¼ tsp	grated nutmeg

1. Heat the oven to 150°C fan (170°C conventional, gas 3). Butter a 1 litre ovenproof dish.
2. Put the rice, sugar and vanilla in the dish. Pour over the milk, stir, then dot the butter on top and grate over the nutmeg.
3. Bake for **1 hour 30 minutes to 2 hours**, stirring in the skin once after the first 30 minutes (leave it alone afterwards, so a golden skin forms).
4. It is ready when the rice is tender, the skin is golden-brown and the pudding is creamy and wobbly under it.

LEVEL 2 · BREAKFAST

Fruity rice porridge

10 minutes | 1 portion | uses up cooked rice

Leftover rice makes a quick, warming breakfast. Because the rice is already cooked, it only needs reheating in the milk.

INGREDIENTS (1 PORTION)

100 g	leftover cooked rice (cooled and refrigerated within the hour, less than 24 hours old)
150 ml	milk
1	small apple, grated
1 tbsp	raisins
½ tsp	ground cinnamon
1 tsp	honey (optional)

1. Put the rice, milk, apple, raisins and cinnamon in a small pan. Bring to a simmer, stirring.
2. Cook gently for **5 to 8 minutes**, stirring, until thick and the apple is soft. It must be steaming hot all the way through.
3. Sweeten with honey if wanted and eat at once. Don't reheat it again.

Experiments

EXPERIMENT

Pudding rice or risotto rice

Do you need pudding rice?

1. Make the stovetop rice pudding twice, once with pudding rice and once with risotto rice, using the same milk and time.
2. Compare how creamy and how tender each is.

Look for: Pudding rice breaks down more and gives a creamier result. Risotto rice keeps its shape longer. Both are fine.

EXPERIMENT

Skimmed, semi-skimmed or whole milk

How much does the milk matter?

1. Make three small stovetop puddings with 40 g rice and 300 ml of skimmed, semi-skimmed and whole milk.
2. Taste them hot and again once cool.

Look for: Whole milk is richest, skimmed is thinner but still creamy thanks to the rice. Is the extra richness worth it?

EXPERIMENT

Sugar early or late

Does the moment you add sugar matter?

1. Make two stovetop puddings. Add the sugar at the start of one. In the other, stir it in at the end.
2. Note how long each takes to soften, and compare the taste.

Look for: A lot of sugar at the start can slow the softening of the rice slightly. Adding it at the end lets you control how sweet it is.

Tasting notes

WHAT I TRIED	METHOD OR AMOUNT	WHAT I SAW	WHAT I THOUGHT	WILL I DO IT AGAIN?
Stovetop rice pudding				
Coconut rice with mango				
Baked rice pudding				
Fruity rice porridge				
Pudding vs risotto rice				
Skimmed, semi, whole milk				
Sugar early vs late				

Troubleshooting

PROBLEM	LIKELY CAUSE	WHAT TO DO
Milk catches on the base	Heat too high, or not stirred	Lowest heat; stir often; use a heavy pan
Pudding too thick	Cooked too long or too much rice	Stir in a splash of hot milk
Pudding too thin	Not cooked long enough	Cook a little longer; it also thickens as it cools
Hard rice in the baked pudding	Oven too cool or time too short	Bake longer; stir once and cover if the skin is browning too fast
No skin on baked pudding	Stirred it back in, or the dish was covered	Don't stir after the first 30 minutes; leave uncovered

FOOD SAFETY: MILK AND RICE

Rice puddings are cooked rice and milk, a very good place for bacteria. Cool leftovers quickly, keep them in the fridge, eat within a day, and don't reheat more than once. Don't leave a pudding to cool on the worktop for hours.

CHECKPOINT: CAN YOU DO THIS NOW?

☐ I can cook rice directly in milk to make a pudding.

☐ I can use coconut milk to make a sweet rice dish.

☐ I know why pudding rice is different from long-grain.

☐ I can stop a milk pudding catching on the pan.

☐ I can use leftover rice for a quick breakfast.

NEXT CHAPTER

Cooking Skills: Rice 1, chapter 9 is Putting It Together: batch cooking, cooling and reheating rice safely, rice bowls and a week of rice meals.

Cooking Skills: Rice 1

Chapter 9 · Putting It Together

SKILL GOAL

Plan, batch-cook and store rice safely, and turn it into different meals through the week.

Shopping list for this chapter

The basics

Rice is one of the best foods to cook in batches: it is cheap, it keeps well when stored properly, and it turns into a different meal each day. This chapter pulls the course together. You will plan a batch, cool and store it safely, then build meals from it across the week.

HABIT	WHY
Cook a batch, then cool it fast	Gives you cold rice for frying and bowls, and keeps it safe
Label with the date and time	You won't have to guess how old it is
Portion before chilling	Small amounts cool faster, and you reheat only what you need
Freeze what you won't use in 24 hours	Freezing stops the clock; defrost in the fridge
Reheat once, steaming hot	Heat kills the growing bacteria (but not the toxin that formed if rice was left warm)

Try it

LEVEL 1 · START HERE

The batch-cook plan

40 minutes, plus cooling | 4 portions | cook once, eat four times

Cooking four portions of rice is barely more work than one, and cold rice is exactly what fried rice and rice bowls want. The skill is in the cooling.

INGREDIENTS (4 PORTIONS)

300 g	long-grain or basmati rice (makes about 4 portions)
3 litres	water
1 tsp	salt
4	airtight containers, labelled with the date and time
1	clean baking tray or two large plates

1. Rinse the rice and boil it in the salted water for **9 to 10 minutes**, as in chapter 2. Drain well.
2. **Cool it fast.** Spread the rice in a thin layer on the baking tray so the steam escapes. Leave it for no more than 30 minutes.
3. Divide into the four containers (about 175 g each), seal and put them in the fridge **within 1 hour** of cooking. Write the time on the lid.
4. Keep two in the fridge for the next day. **Freeze the other two** straight away, flat if possible.
5. To reheat, spoon on a splash of water, cover, and heat until it is steaming hot all through (2 to 3 minutes in the microwave, or a few minutes in a covered pan). Defrost frozen rice in the fridge first. Eat reheated rice once only.

> **THE RULES IN ONE LINE**
>
> Cool within the hour. Fridge for no more than 24 hours. Reheat once, steaming hot throughout. Defrosted rice must be reheated straight away.

LEVEL 2 · BOWL ONE

Rice bowl: egg and greens

15 minutes | 1 portion | vegetarian

A bowl is just rice plus three or four toppings, balanced for colour, crunch and sauce. Reheat the rice first, steaming hot.

INGREDIENTS (1 PORTION)

175 g	cold cooked rice, reheated (about 60 g dry)
1	medium egg, soft-boiled for 6 minutes
60 g	frozen edamame beans or peas, boiled 3 minutes
5 cm	cucumber, sliced
1 tsp	reduced-salt soy sauce
½ tsp	toasted sesame oil
1 tsp	sesame seeds

1. Reheat the rice with a splash of water until steaming hot. Boil the egg for 6 minutes, cool under cold water and peel; boil the edamame or peas for 3 minutes and drain.
2. Pile the rice in a bowl. Arrange the egg (halved), beans and cucumber on top.
3. Drizzle over the soy sauce and sesame oil and scatter with sesame seeds.

LEVEL 2 · BOWL TWO

Rice bowl: spiced chickpeas

15 minutes | 1 portion | vegetarian, cheap

Spiced chickpeas fried until they are crisp at the edges give the bowl protein and fibre.

INGREDIENTS (1 PORTION)

175 g	cold cooked rice, reheated
120 g	tinned chickpeas, drained
1 tsp	oil
½ tsp	ground cumin
½ tsp	smoked paprika
1	tomato, chopped
2 tbsp	natural yoghurt
1 tsp	lemon juice

1. Reheat the rice until steaming hot.
2. Heat the oil in a small pan, add the chickpeas, cumin and paprika, and fry for **5 minutes** until lightly crisp.
3. Pile the rice in a bowl, spoon over the chickpeas and chopped tomato, then add the yoghurt and lemon juice.

LEVEL 3 · BOWL THREE

Rice bowl: chicken, avocado and lime

20 minutes | 1 portion | fresh and filling

Thinly sliced chicken cooks in minutes. If you use leftover cooked chicken, make sure it is steaming hot all through, or serve it cold from the fridge.

INGREDIENTS (1 PORTION)

175 g	cold cooked rice, reheated
100 g	chicken breast, sliced thinly (or leftover cooked chicken)
1 tsp	oil
½	ripe avocado, sliced
1	tomato, chopped
½	lime, juice only
1 tbsp	chopped coriander

1. Reheat the rice until steaming hot.
2. Fry the chicken in the oil over a medium-high heat for **5 to 6 minutes**, turning, until golden with no pink inside.
3. Pile the rice in a bowl and top with the chicken, avocado and tomato. Squeeze over the lime juice and add the coriander.

A week of rice meals

One way to use rice every day without getting bored. Swap any day, but keep the order that suits the rice: fresh rice first, day-old rice for frying, and never reheat the same rice twice.

DAY	MEAL	WHICH RICE
Monday	Cook the batch (chapter 9); eat one portion as a pilaf or plain with grilled fish	Fresh
Tuesday	Egg fried rice or vegetable fried rice	Day-old rice from Monday

DAY	MEAL	WHICH RICE
Wednesday	Spiced chickpea bowl	Defrosted portion, reheated once
Thursday	Mushroom risotto	Fresh (risotto rice)
Friday	Chicken and vegetable fried rice	A fresh, cooled batch
Saturday	Coconut rice with a curry or grilled fish	Fresh (jasmine)
Sunday	Baked rice pudding	Fresh (pudding rice)

Experiments

EXPERIMENT

Cooling methods

See which way of cooling rice is fastest.

1. Cook 300 g of rice and divide it into three equal lots.
2. Spread one thinly on a tray, pack the second into a deep container, and put the third in a shallow bowl standing in a bigger bowl of cold water.
3. Check every 10 minutes (with a thermometer, or by feel) until each is no longer warm. Write down the times.

Look for: The thin layer on the tray cools fastest and the deep container slowest. A deep, packed container keeps the middle warm for much longer than you think.

EXPERIMENT

Reheated or freshly cooked

Can you taste the difference?

1. Cook rice, then split it. Eat half straight away.
2. Cool the other half properly, refrigerate, and reheat the next day with a splash of water until steaming hot.
3. Compare the texture and taste.

Look for: Reheated rice is a little firmer and drier, but with a splash of water it comes back well. For fried rice and bowls it's actually better.

EXPERIMENT

Your own rice bowl

Design a bowl you'd make again.

1. Choose a rice, a protein, two vegetables and a sauce, using the bowl recipes as a guide.
2. Make it, taste it, and change one thing.
3. Write your final version into your house recipes.

Look for: A balance of soft and crunchy, hot and cool, and something fresh (herbs, lemon or lime) to finish.

Your skills

SKILL	CHAPTER	I CAN DO IT
Choose a rice for the dish	1	☐
Boil rice and steam it dry	2	☐
Cool, store and reheat rice safely	2 and 9	☐
Absorption rice (hob, oven, microwave)	3	☐
Cook brown rice and mixed grains	4	☐

SKILL	CHAPTER	I CAN DO IT
Toast rice for a pilaf and flavour it	5	☐
Fry rice at a high heat	6	☐
Make risotto	7	☐
Rice pudding and sweet rice	8	☐

Tasting notes

WHAT I TRIED	METHOD OR AMOUNT	WHAT I SAW	WHAT I THOUGHT	WILL I DO IT AGAIN?
Batch-cook plan				
Egg and greens bowl				
Spiced chickpea bowl				
Chicken, avocado and lime bowl				
Cooling methods				
Reheated vs freshly cooked				
My own rice bowl				

My house recipes

MY HOUSE RECIPE	RICE AND METHOD	FLAVOURS AND EXTRAS	HOW LONG	NOTES
My everyday rice				
My rice side dish				
My rice bowl				
My fried rice				
My treat				

Troubleshooting

PROBLEM	LIKELY CAUSE	WHAT TO DO
Frozen rice is dry or hard	Frozen uncovered, or reheated too briefly	Splash with water, cover and reheat until steaming hot
Reheated rice is hard	Not enough moisture	Add a splash of water and cover while heating
Rice is cold in the middle	Reheated in a large lump	Break it up and spread it out, then stir halfway
Rice smells off	Kept too long or cooled too slowly	Throw it away; don't taste it
Bowl is dull	Everything is the same texture	Add something crunchy and something fresh

FOOD SAFETY: THE WHOLE COURSE IN ONE BOX

Cool cooked rice within 1 hour. Fridge it in a sealed container and eat it within 24 hours. Reheat once, until steaming hot all the way through. If it has been left out, or you aren't sure, throw it away.

CHECKPOINT: CAN YOU DO THIS NOW?

- ☐ I can cook, cool, portion and store a batch of rice safely.
- ☐ I can reheat rice so it is steaming hot all the way through.
- ☐ I can build a rice bowl from rice, protein, vegetables and a sauce.
- ☐ I can plan a week of meals around rice without waste.
- ☐ I have written down my own house recipes.

NEXT CHAPTER

That's the end of Cooking Skills: Rice 1. A possible Rice 2 could cover sushi and onigiri, paella, biryani and jollof. The next course in the series is up to you.