

LEVELED BOOK • N

Making Rice



Written by Ting Gee

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Rice is a very important food for more than half of the world's people. In many Asian countries, rice is eaten at every meal.

Many areas of the world have grown rice for thousands of years. In China, scientists discovered rice fields that were over 8,000 years old. That means rice has been a part of life in China for a very long time. Growing and cooking rice are a part of China's culture.



There are about 7,000 kinds of rice. They include long- and short-grain rice, sweet rice, wild rice, and brown rice. Rice is low in salt and fat. It is an excellent source of starch. Rice is grown in many countries of the world. It grows in fields called *paddies*. Some rice needs lots of water to grow. So some rice paddies are flooded with water.



Many people greet each other by saying, “How are you?” But in China people greet each other differently. They say, “Chi fan mayo?” It means, “Have you eaten rice yet?” Rice is used in many other Chinese sayings, too. If you say, “I lost my rice bowl,” it means “I lost my job.” Throwing a rice bowl on the floor is an insult and a sign of anger.



The Chinese teach their children that they must eat every grain of rice in their bowls. It is a way of showing appreciation for farmers who work hard in the rice fields.

Rice is used to make many things in China. Parts of the rice plant are used to make paper and baskets. But the most important product is food. Rice grain is used for making rice wine and vinegar.

Rice can be crushed into rice flour. The flour is used to



make rice cakes, noodles, and sweet treats. Rice is used to make many tasty dishes, such as chicken-fried rice. You are going to learn to make this dish. But first, you must learn how to make plain rice. It's easy, so let's try it.

Before you start, wash your hands and put on an apron. Cooking is a lot of fun. But it's important to be very careful working with sharp knives, hot pans, and a hot stove. Always wear oven gloves when you pick up hot pots and pans.





Before you cook, it is best to gather what you need. It is also a good idea to clean up as you go along. Be sure to ask an adult to help with the cutting. And always have an adult around when working near a hot stove.



To cook rice you need these tools:

- A measuring cup
- A saucepan with a lid
- A strainer

You also need these things:

- 2 cups of long-grain rice
- 3 cups of water

Now you are ready to prepare the food.

- ❶ Measure two cups of rice.
- ❷ Place the rice in a strainer. Rinse well with cold water.
- ❸ Place the clean rice in the pan. Add three cups of water.
- ❹ Place the pan on the stove. Bring the water to a boil. Boil until the rice absorbs most of the water.
- ❺ Cover the pan with a lid. Simmer over low heat for 15 minutes. Two cups of uncooked rice will become 6 cups of fluffy rice.



Serve rice as the base for a great meal. Rice is good with many Chinese dishes.

For example, it is good with sweet and sour pork, orange chicken, and beef broccoli.



Or you can serve rice with steaks, fish, or chili and beans.



Now that you can make rice, let's try a popular Chinese dish—chicken-fried rice. First, get the tools you will need:

- A cutting board
- A sharp knife
- 2 small mixing bowls
- A fork
- A measuring cup and measuring spoons
- A large nonstick frying pan or a wok
- A spatula or a large wooden spoon





You will also need the following things:

- 5 green onions
- 1 large cooked chicken breast (boneless)
- 4 cups of cooked, chilled rice
- 3 eggs
- ½ cup of frozen peas, thawed
- 3 tablespoons of vegetable oil
- Salt and pepper to taste

You will need to make a sauce.
So get these things:

- 2 tablespoons of chicken broth
- 2 tablespoons of soy sauce
- 1 teaspoon of sesame oil
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon of pepper





Now it is time to get to work. You will need an adult to do the cutting.

- ❶ Chop the green onions on the cutting board.
- ❷ Cut the chicken breast into small strips.
- ❸ In one small bowl, beat the eggs with a fork.
- ❹ In the other small bowl, measure what you need for the sauce. Then mix those ingredients together.

Now it's time to cook. Make sure you have an adult around to help.

- ❶ Heat the vegetable oil in the frying pan.
- ❷ Stir-fry the eggs until scrambled, about 1 minute.
- ❸ Add the green onions, chicken, and peas. Stir them over a high heat, for about 2 minutes.



- ❹ Add the rice and sauce, and stir for 2 more minutes.
- ❺ Taste to see if you need a pinch of salt or pepper.

Serve while it's hot. Put it in a large serving bowl or put it on dinner plates.

Chicken-fried
rice makes
a tasty meal
for your
family and
friends.

Enjoy it often.
And when
someone asks
you, “Chi fan
mayo?” you
can answer “Chi-la” (yes).



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