

Crop – Rice



Rice, a monocot, is normally grown as an annual plant, although in tropical areas it can survive as a perennial and can produce a ratoon crop for up to 30 years. Rice cultivation is well-suited to countries and regions with low labor costs and high rainfall, as it is labor-intensive to cultivate and requires ample water. However, rice can be grown practically anywhere, even on a steep hill or mountain area with the use of water-controlling terrace systems. Although its parent species are native to Asia and certain parts of Africa, centuries of trade and exportation have made it commonplace in many cultures worldwide.

Environmental Impacts

1. Temperature

Rice requires high temperature above 20°C (68°F) but not more than 35 to 40°C (95 to 104°F). Optimum temperature is around 30°C and 20°C.

2. Solar radiation

The amount of solar radiation received during the 45 days leading up to harvest determines final crop output.

3. Atmospheric water vapor

High water vapor content (in humid tropics) subjects unusual stress which favors the spread of fungal and bacterial diseases.

4. Wind

Light wind transports CO₂ to the leaf canopy but strong wind causes severe damage and may lead to sterility (due to pollen dehydration, spikelet sterility, and abortive endosperms).

India's Indigenous Rice Varieties

One of the earliest records of Indian agriculture and rice in particular, come from the Greek philosopher Theophrastus, who traveled to India with Alexander. He described Indian rice as a grain similar to the Emmer wheat he knew (long grained “Khapli” wheat). In those times, rice was as valued for its medicinal properties, as it was for being a source of income.

The first two types of rice grown in India were Sali and Vrihi. The Sali rice cultivar was harvested in the winter. Vrihi, on the other hand, was an ordinary variety of rice that was harvested in autumn. A third, more sophisticated variety was the Maha-Sali, which was a longer grain and had more fragrance. This has been identified with present day Basmati. Sali is a term that is still used today in many dialects to refer to rice in general.

1. Ambe Mohor

Ambe Mohor, literally meaning the inflorescence of the mango, is an incredibly fragrant short grain rice typical to Maharashtra, where it is relished cooked soft with a drizzle of ghee and metkoot or in the various spiced rice preparations. Try making a traditional Maharashtrian Masale Bhaat using this variety of rice along with vegetables such as a ivy gourd and peas.

2. Gobindobhog

Similar but slightly daintier than the Ambe Mohor is the Gobindobhog, the rice of Payesh in Bengal and the proud bearer of a geographical identification tag. Try it in a Payesh recipe with minimal spices to allow the rice to show off its full flavour.

3. Chak-Hao

Black rice was once called “forbidden rice” in China not because it looked unusual but because it had such high nutrient value that it was only reserved for the consumption of royalty. Today, black rice is vastly domesticated in North East India, Bengal, Jharkhand, and Odisha, and is treasured for its medicinal properties. Commonly known as Chak-hao, it forms the centre of Manipuri celebratory feasts. Medical research has shown that Chak-hao is an effective remedy for inflammation and helps in protecting the body from cancer. This rice can be cooked and eaten with light stews as well as in the form of a sweet kheer.

4. Matta

Matta rice, the fat, red-streaked separate grains of rice that become the carrier of the plethora of accompaniments on a Sadhya meal is the indigenous parboiled rice of Kerala and is distinct from brown rice. Brown rice is simply any variety of rice with the husk on. Matta rice has a relatively lower glycemic index and pairs well with non vegetarian as well as vegetarian curries.

5. Sikandar

This relatively newer variety of rice is grown in a small radius in Maharashtra and central India, and is usually available in a semi-polished state with part of the skin on. A complex carbohydrate, this rice has a distinct nutty aroma and works very well in a simple Khichdi or as a rice gruel. Our Sikander rice comes from a farming co-operative in Maharashtra.

6. Patni

Patni is a Maharashtrian variety of rice, ours which comes from a small farming co-operative in Shahpur. This radiant red hued rice has almost all of the outer skin intact, which imparts an unusual crunchy texture to the rice. Try it in salads or soups!

7. Indrani

The main factor that differentiates Indrani from Sikander is that it is a slightly longer grained rice. It is a tad stickier than Sikander and is arguably even more aromatic and earthy in flavour. Our Indrani comes from a farming co-operative in Maharashtra, that helps small farmers to convert to organic farming.