

5 Easy and Super Nutritious Rice Recipes

And they pack a powerful protein punch!

By Susan Marque Published August 20, 2026

Rice might be the most versatile food there is. While you can use any rice you like in these [recipes](#), my go-to is the short-grain brown rice. It packs a powerful punch of [nutrition](#) too. White rice is just brown rice with the bran and germ removed. The outer layers are where all of the real nutrition lies.

Each serving has about five grams of [protein](#), snuggled alongside B vitamins, zinc, phosphorus, magnesium and so much more. The middle is simply starch. The bran is packed with [fiber](#). Feel free to mix and mingle types of rice or proteins.

Chicken Egg Roll Rice

Using shredded store-bought “coleslaw” cabbage with carrots makes this recipe a breeze. If you don’t have anything crunchy, like the optional fried wonton skins, a sprinkle of roasted [almonds](#) on top is nice too. Sesame oil will be a bit heavier and give extra flavor, but I use olive oil all the time and it works great.



Ingredients for 4 servings:

- 2 raw chicken breasts, cut into chunks
- 4 cups already cooked rice
- 1 9-ounce bag “coleslaw” shredded cabbage with carrots
- 4 ribs celery, chopped
- 4 medium carrots, chopped
- 2–3 garlic cloves, chopped
- 2 large green onions, sliced
- 1 cup parsley, chopped
- 4 teaspoons oil (sesame or olive)
- Grated ginger to taste
- Tamari (soy sauce) and pepper to taste

Place the oil in a skillet over medium heat. Add the green onions, garlic, carrots and celery. Stir. Add the chicken and approximately 1/4 cup of water. Add the cabbage and simmer for 10 minutes. Stir in the rice, letting it soak up any remaining liquid. Season with tamari (soy sauce), pepper and ginger to taste. Garnish with fried wontons or chopped roasted almonds.

Roasted Rice with Carrots and Corn

I bet you didn't know that most grains can be toasted. Some even pop like [popcorn](#). You'll get a few of those kernels when roasting short-grain brown rice. You can roast it directly out of the package, but I like to soak it overnight to soften it up. You can roast a lot and save it in a jar for another time. This is a great side dish for a simple poached fish. White sushi rice works too.

Ingredients for 4 servings:

- 1 cup short-grain brown rice, soaked overnight
- 2 medium carrots, chopped
- Kernels from 1 ear of corn (1 cup frozen works too)
- 2 cups water
- Pinch of sea salt

Drain and rinse the rice, then place in a skillet over medium-high heat. Stir continuously until the rice is golden brown and a few kernels begin to pop. Transfer to a pot. Add the carrots and water. Bring to a boil and add the pinch of sea salt.

Simmer until all of the water is absorbed (approximately 15–30 minutes). Add the corn in the last five minutes. Turn off the heat and let rest for another five minutes before serving.

French Onion Rice Soup

This [soup](#) is vegan but you can always add some cheese to it if you want to. For this recipe, I like to use arborio rice because it becomes wonderfully creamy as it cooks and makes the soup comforting and thick. Dried mushrooms add a burst of umami flavor, or use fresh if that's what you have.

Ingredients for 4 servings:

- 2 medium onions, sliced (brown, white or red all work)
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 bay leaves
- 1 teaspoon thyme
- 2–4 dried shiitake mushrooms (or other dried mushrooms)
- 1 cup arborio rice
- 6 cups water
- Tamari to taste
- Black pepper, optional
- Parsley or basil for garnish

Place the oil in a pot over medium heat. Add the onion slices and stir. Turn the heat to low and place a lid on the pot. Stir every 15 minutes until the onions are caramelized. This takes approximately 40 minutes. Add the water, bay leaves, mushrooms, thyme and rice. Bring to a boil and then simmer for 20 minutes or until rice is soft. If it becomes very thick, you can add more water. Season with tamari to taste. Remove bay leaves before serving. Garnish with [fresh basil or parsley](#).



Crunchy Sweet Rice Salad

You can substitute winter squash chunks for the beet if you want to, but the ruby-red color is striking with the green in this [salad](#). Feel free to add some feta cheese or baked tofu chunks to make it even richer.

Ingredients for 4 servings:

- 2 small beets, peeled and chopped
- 1 cup sugar snap peas, chopped
- 1 cup roasted almonds
- 4 tablespoons fresh parsley, chopped
- 4 tablespoons fresh mint, chopped
- 4 tablespoons green onion tops, chopped
- 4 cups cooked rice
- Juice of 2 limes
- 1/4 cup olive oil plus a little more for roasting the beets

Place a small amount of olive oil in a small fry pan and add the beet pieces. Roast for approximately 10 minutes, stirring once or twice. Put all of the ingredients into a mixing bowl and add the beets. Stir and serve.

Smoky Rice Skillet

[Beans](#), beef, fish or fowl, use what you like in this. I always have a can of beans in the cupboard. This is one of those quick to make and quick to clean up kind of recipes.

Ingredients for 4 servings:

- 4 cups cooked rice
- 1 cup beans, or protein of your choice for 4
- 1/2 onion, chopped
- 3 large cloves garlic, chopped
- 4 medium carrots, chopped
- 3 cups spinach or other dark greens, chopped
- Juice of 2 lemons
- 3/4 teaspoon smoked paprika
- 1/4 cup olive oil

Place the olive oil in a large pan over medium heat. Add the paprika, onion, garlic and carrot pieces. Stir for a couple of minutes until the onion cooks through. Add the beans, spinach and about 1/4-1/2 cup of water. Cook for a couple minutes and then add the rice. Stir and mix until the water is all absorbed. Turn off the heat and add the lemon juice.

Susan Marque is a Los Angeles-based writer and actor whose work appears in the Los Angeles Times, Healthline, Apartment Therapy, Vitacost and AARP's digital properties, among others. She holds an MFA from The New School. Find her at susanmarque.com.

