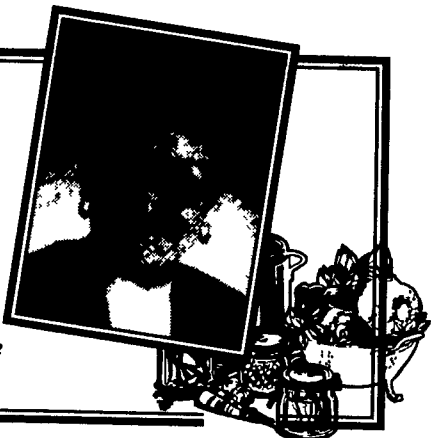


# Consuming Thoughts

by  
**Fay Strickler**

*Penn State Extension Home Economist For Berks Co.*



As American palettes are exposed to more foods of other cultures, rice is becoming an increasingly important part of the American diet. Many common Asian, Spanish, Indian, Mexican, and Cajun dishes call for rice.

As a result, the rice cooker, a common appliance in Korea, China, and Japan, and other Asian countries is now becoming more popular with American consumers because it is convenient and it can consistently produce perfect fluffy rice, without scorching or becoming soggy or dry.

The three-cup cooker is the best seller, followed by the

seven-cup capacity version. Cooker prices range from \$19.99 for basic model to \$69.95 for moderate ones to several hundred dollar models. Cool-touch sides for safety and nonstick surfaces for easy clean-up are important at all price levels. At the higher prices, performance features may include fuzzy-logic computerization with timers, automatic on and off settings to keep rice warm for hours after cooking, and options such as steam trays and egg poachers.

Before you decide to purchase the higher-priced model, consider how often you will use the features and whether it really is worth spending the extra money.

It's also important to consider if you have a place to store another appliance.

Cooking with rice is an excellent way to stretch your food dollars. Using rice will help you prepare economical dishes that are still delicious and nutritious. Rice is free of cholesterol, fat and sodium, but rich in complex carbohydrates, the perfect choice for quick to fix recipes at any meal.

Uncooked white rice can be stored on a shelf and is ready to use with no washing, peeling, or chopping. Once opened, rice should be stored in an airtight container. Cooked rice may be stored in the refrigerator in an airtight container for up to one week or in the freezer for six months.

Get into the healthy habit of cooking double batches of rice. With extra rice on hand you can easily put together quick stir fries, hot or cold salads, casseroles and desserts.

Liven up rice with these quick tips:

- Add flavor to rice by cooking rice in chicken, beef, or vegetable broth.

- Make an elegant salad by tossing cool rice with marinated

artichoke hearts, Italian dressing, and Parmesan cheese.

- Serve grilled chicken with hot rice tossed with sautéed onion and snipped fresh cilantro.

- Create a quick fried rice by sautéing chopped ginger, green onions, and bacon; add cooked rice and a splash of soy sauce.

- Stir sautéed red or green pepper strips and garlic into hot rice cooked in chicken broth.

- Toss cool rice with fresh fruits and ham; serve with a honey/yogurt dressing for a cool summer salad.

- Cook rice in chicken broth, the juice of one lemon, one clove of minced garlic and a pinch of pepper. Garnish with snipped

fresh parsley.

### Turkey Waldorf Salad

- 1 cup cooked rice (cooked in chicken broth), cooled
- 1 cup cooked turkey breast strips
- 3/4 cup diced unpeeled apple
- 1/2 cup sliced celery
- 2 Tbs. slivered almonds, toasted
- 3 Tbs. bottled poppy seed salad dressing
- Lettuce leaves

Combine all ingredients except lettuce in medium bowl. Serve on lettuce leaves. Makes 2 servings. Per serving: 380 calories, 25.1 g protein, 15.7 g fat, 33.8 g carbohydrate, 657 mg sodium, 49 mg cholesterol.

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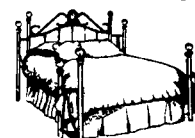


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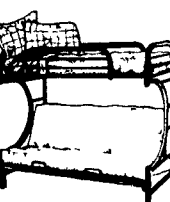
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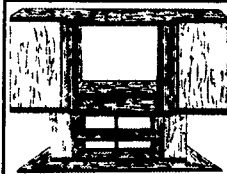
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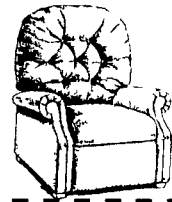


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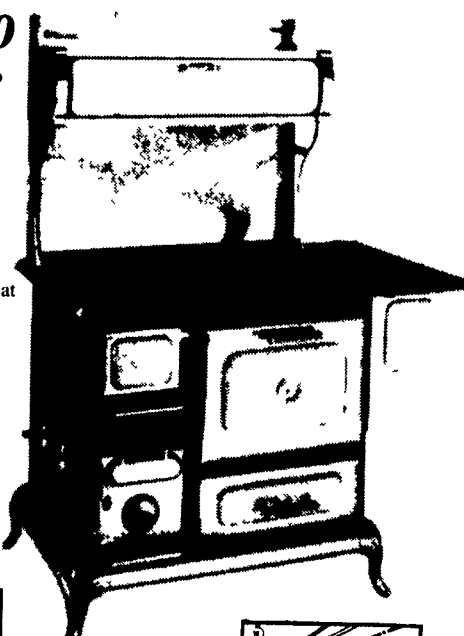
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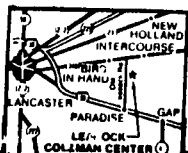
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