

Try These Budget-stretching All-stars: Rice and Beans!



Have you ever had beans and rice at a Mexican restaurant? Rice and beans often are paired together on menus because they form a “complete protein” with all the amino acids (protein building blocks) your body needs for good nutrition. Check out this month’s recipe on the back.

Save Some Money

Beans and rice are a nutritious “team” that can help you stretch your budget. Add beans to soup, chili or side dishes.

You can save even more money by starting with dry beans and soaking them. For example, a 1-cup serving of rice and beans would cost about 12 cents if you soak the beans.

½ cup canned pinto beans	19 cents
½ cup cooked pinto beans (starting with dry beans)	7 cents
½ cup cooked white rice	5 cents

5 Steps to Soaking and Cooking Dry Beans

1. Inspect the dry beans, removing any broken beans or small stones.
2. Rinse the beans thoroughly in cold water.
3. Use the preferred “hot soak” method: Add 10 cups of cold water to a large pot (4 quarts or more) for each pound (2 cups) of beans prepared. Bring the water to a boil and boil for about three minutes. Cover the pot and let stand for about four hours.
4. Drain and rinse the soaked beans.
5. Add fresh, cold water to fully cover the soaked beans, plus 1 to 2 tablespoons of oil, if you wish. Adding oil prevents foaming and boiling over. Simmer the beans until they are tender.

2 cups of dry beans = 4 cups of cooked beans

Cut Sodium With This Simple Tip

Canned beans (such as kidney or pinto) are convenient options, but they often contain added salt. Most people have too much salt (sodium) in their diet, and that puts them at higher risk for heart disease. If you prefer to use canned beans, be sure to drain the liquid and rinse the beans in a colander.

This easy step can rinse away about 40 percent of the sodium. Look for reduced-sodium varieties, too.

This program is funded in part by USDA’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. SNAP provides nutrition assistance to people with low income. It can help you buy nutritious foods for a better diet. To find out more contact your county Social Services office or call 1-800-755-2716.

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Here's a recipe making use of this month's nutrition all-stars.

MEXICAN SKILLET RICE

- 1 pound lean ground beef*
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 2 Tbsp. chili powder
- 1 tsp. ground cumin
- ½ tsp. salt (optional)
- 3 c. cooked brown or white rice
- 1 (16-ounce) can pinto beans, drained and rinsed**
- 2 (4-ounce) cans diced green chili peppers (do not drain)
- 1 medium fresh tomato, chopped

1. Prepare rice according to the directions on the package. One cup of uncooked rice will yield about 3 cups of cooked rice. If you prepare the rice the day before, be sure to keep cooked rice refrigerated.

2. In a large skillet over medium-high heat, cook meat until brown, stirring to crumble; drain grease.

*Note: You can use 2 cups of leftover cooked turkey or chicken in place of the ground beef.

3. Add onion, chili powder, cumin and salt; cook until onion is tender.

4. Stir in rice, beans and chili peppers; heat thoroughly.

**Note: You can substitute 1½ cups of soaked, cooked dry beans for the canned beans.

5. Top with diced tomato and serve immediately.

Makes six servings.

Each serving has 313 calories, 9 grams (g) of fat, 43 g of carbohydrate, 17 g of protein, 6 g of fiber and 340 milligrams of sodium.

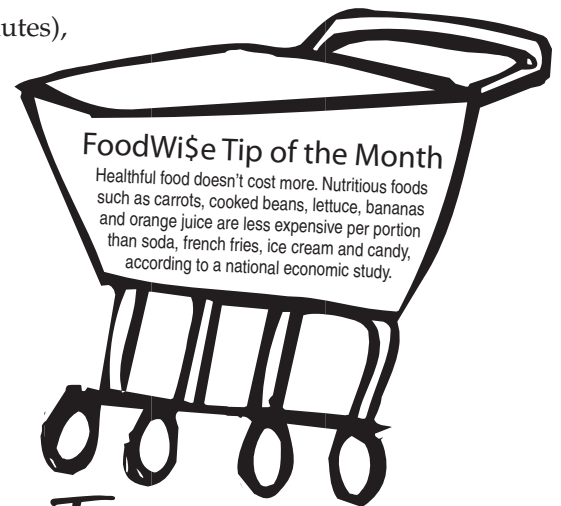


What is the difference between white and brown rice besides the color? How do I prepare it?

You've probably heard this: "Make half your grains whole grains." Brown rice is a whole-grain food. Brown rice has the bran layer still on the grain. Eating more whole grains helps protect us from heart disease, cancer and diabetes. Brown rice has more fiber than white rice, so it helps us feel "fuller."

You will find all the different kinds of rice near each other in most grocery stores. Brown rice may cost a little more than white rice. You might find three different sizes of brown rice in some grocery stores: long grain, medium grain and short grain. When you cook long-grain rice, the grains remain light and do not stick together. Short-grain rice tends to stick together after it is cooked.

For best results, follow the cooking directions on the package. Brown rice usually takes about twice as much time to cook (40 to 45 minutes), compared with white rice (15 to 20 minutes).

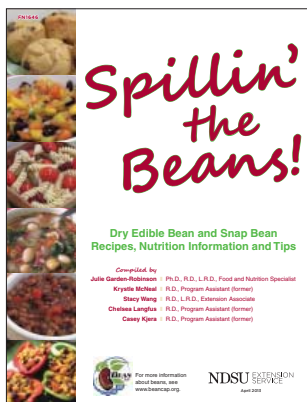


Just for Fun

Why did the man eat at the bank?
Because he wanted to eat rich food!

Menu Idea:

Mexican Skillet Rice,
tossed green salad,
orange slices, low-fat
or fat-free milk



Learn More About Cooking With Beans

- Watch the online videos at www.ndsu.edu/eatsmart
- Check out "Spillin' the Beans," a free online cookbook at www.ag.ndsu.edu/pubs/yf/foods/fn1646_full.pdf

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