



NUTRIENT BOOST

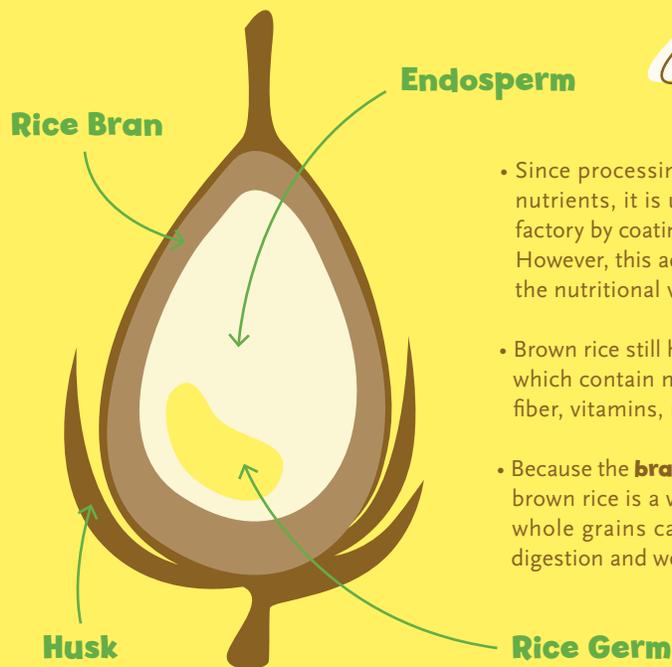
CHOOSE BROWN RICE

Switching from white to brown rice instantly packs more nutrition into your favorite meals. **Who doesn't love rice?** Rice has been prevalent in the human diet for centuries and is a popular ingredient in nearly every culture—but not all rice is nutritionally equal! Brown rice packs more nutrition than white rice and it's an easy substitute.

BROWN VS. WHITE RICE

- White rice actually starts out brown! It becomes white rice when it is milled and polished to remove the outer layers, called the **bran** and **germ**. This also removes many naturally occurring nutrients.
- Brown rice is minimally processed, which makes it nutritionally superior to white rice. Only the **husk** is removed, so it stays brown and has a mild, nutty flavor and satisfying, hearty texture.

Read the “Choose Whole Grain Bread Instead” edition of *Better Bites* for more on whole grains.



- Since processing strips white rice of nutrients, it is usually “enriched” in the factory by coating it with a vitamin powder. However, this adds back only a portion of the nutritional value that was removed.
- Brown rice still has the **bran** and the **germ**, which contain many nutrients, including fiber, vitamins, magnesium and selenium.
- Because the **bran** and **germ** remain intact, brown rice is a whole grain. The fiber in whole grains can support heart health, digestion and weight management.

GO A STEP FURTHER

Try different types of brown rice to learn what your family likes. In general: long grain is firmer, medium grain is fluffier, short grain is chewier, brown basmati has a nuttier taste, brown jasmine is highly aromatic.

Try other colorful and exotic rice varieties. Varieties of black or red rice also generally provide more nutrition than white, and each one has a unique flavor and texture. It's fun for kids to experiment and try the different colors.

Try other “rice-like” whole grains, including millet and quinoa, which have similar cooking methods and nutrition benefits.



TIPS FOR PARENTS

- Make a big pot of brown rice at the beginning of the week and use it throughout for different meals (see recipes on back).
- Freeze cooked brown rice by spreading it in a thin layer on a baking pan, place the pan in the freezer overnight, then transfer frozen rice to a freezer bag. It will keep for up to three months and is easy to throw into any dish.
- Add leftover brown rice to soups, stews and casseroles. Or use it to make fried rice, rice balls (see activity) or rice pudding.
- If the kids don't love the brown rice switch at first, try mixing half brown and half white rice, then transition gradually to all brown.
- When substituting brown for white rice in recipes, keep in mind that brown rice has a slightly longer cooking time and absorbs more liquid than white.
- Buy rice in the bulk section of the grocery store for the best value. Read the “Bulk Up on Value” edition of *Better Bites* for more bulk shopping tips.

HANDS-ON ACTIVITY Have a Ball with Brown Rice

Filling ideas: chopped cooked veggies (great use for leftovers—especially stir-fry), cheese cubes, beans or bean paste, peanut or almond butter, avocado, tuna or salmon, sesame seeds

What You'll Need

leftover cooked brown rice, salt, plastic wrap, filling of your choice



Step 1 Tear off a square of plastic wrap and lay it flat, then sprinkle it very lightly with salt (to season and help prevent sticking).



Step 2 Mound approximately $\frac{1}{3}$ cup of cooked brown rice in the center of the plastic wrap (warm rice works best).



Step 3 Wrap the plastic around the rice and twist it at the top (like a candy wrapper) then press and form the rice into a ball.



Step 4 Open the plastic wrap and use your thumb to create a well in the center of the ball (like a nest).



Step 5 Put a spoonful of filling (see idea list above) in the well, then wrap the ball up again in the plastic and shape it back into a ball so the rice completely surrounds the filling.



Repeat to make as many rice balls as you wish and enjoy—they're great for the lunch box!

RECIPES

Let kids help with the simple steps in **bold!**

ONE POT = 3 MEALS!

Cook up a single batch of Basic Brown Rice and use it all week long to make these three meals or use leftover rice.

Basic Brown Rice

One cup uncooked brown rice makes about 3–4 cups cooked rice. For each cup of dry brown rice, use $2\frac{1}{2}$ cups water or broth. Put the rice and water in a large stockpot and bring it to a boil. Reduce heat to a low simmer, cover the pot and cook 30–40 minutes (cooking time will vary depending on the specific variety of brown rice) until most of the liquid has been absorbed and rice is tender. Let stand 5 minutes with the lid on. Fluff the rice with a fork before serving. Drain away any excess liquid if necessary. If liquid absorbs too quickly, add more during cooking (this may extend cooking time slightly).

Tips: Use a large enough pot with a tight-fitting lid. For softer rice, allow uncooked rice to soak in the pot of water for 15 minutes or up to 24 hours before cooking.

BREAKFAST

Maple Brown Rice Breakfast

approx. 1 cup cooked brown rice per person
2 teaspoons maple syrup per serving
dash of cinnamon

optional ingredients:
milk (cow, soy, almond or rice), shredded unsweetened coconut, slivered almonds, chopped nuts (any kind), dried cranberries, apricots or raisins

Step 1: Put 1 cup of pre-cooked brown rice in a microwave-safe bowl for each person. **Step 2:** Warm rice up in the microwave. **Step 3:** Let each person drizzle and sprinkle on optional ingredients of their choice to taste.

LUNCH

Chicken and Brown Rice Soup

8 cups chicken broth
2 celery stalks, chopped
2 carrots, chopped
1 leek, washed and sliced (optional)
approx. 2 cups cooked brown rice

1–2 cups shredded cooked chicken breast (optional)
2 teaspoons fresh or dried thyme
1 teaspoon fresh or dried sage
salt and pepper to taste

Use Creole seasoning, Mexican spices or Thai chile paste—whatever suits your taste! **Step 1:** Bring broth to a boil in a large stock pot. **Step 2:** Add chopped vegetables to the pot and simmer until carrots are tender (approx. 15 minutes). **Step 3:** Add brown rice, shredded chicken and herbs to the pot and continue simmering until heated through (approx. 2–3 minutes) and add salt and pepper to taste.

Tip: Change up the herbs and spices if you wish.

DINNER

Build-Your-Own Bowl Night

Set up a station in the kitchen and let everyone in the family assemble their own ideal meal. Place approximately 1 cup cooked brown rice in a bowl for each family member and warm it up in the microwave. Then set out an assortment of proteins, veggies, herbs, sauces and any other toppings your family dreams up.

Ingredient and topping suggestions: **Proteins:** garbanzo beans, black beans, lentils, tofu cubes, chopped nuts, sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds **Veggies/herbs:** raw shredded or steamed carrots, steamed broccoli, roasted beets, sliced summer squash (cooked or raw), sliced peppers, sliced cucumber, chopped tomatoes, chopped onions, avocado, lettuces, sprouts, fresh parsley or cilantro **Sauces:** salad dressings, salsas, hot sauces, soy sauce, teriyaki sauce, tahini or peanut sauce, curry sauces, chimichurri, tomato sauce, lemon or lime juice