

## taste buds

chef Larry  
JanesWorld  
depends  
on rice

Rice is one of the world's most important foodstuffs that provides basic sustenance to more than half the population of the globe. The cuisines of Japan, China, India and Southeast Asia are all rice based; few meals are served without it.

You will find rice on an African Baboon dinner table, and in a Spanish paella or paella, a true Hungarian stuffed cabbage, a French pilaf or an Italian risotto. In the good old USA, rice is as comfortable sitting next to a meatloaf as it is with a lobster Newburg.

Thousands of varieties of rice are cultivated, but the most important distinction from the cook's standpoint is the length of the grain. Long grain rice has a decidedly different texture when cooked than short grain rice and is thus better suited to certain types of dishes.

SOME COOKS insist on washing or soaking the rice before use. Although washing removes external starch particles that might cause stickiness, it also washes away any vitamin or protein enrichment. On the other hand, some cooks claim that rinsing gives the rice a cleaner, lighter taste. Whether the nutritional loss is worth the improved flavor, or whether indeed the flavor improvement is noticeable, is a matter of personal taste.

There are as many ways to cook rice as there are major varieties. While growing up in Wyandotte, Momma served legions of the venerable Uncle Ben's. On Fridays, especially during Lent, Minute Rice was the star that was usually accompanied by a piece of Shake 'n Bake for fish.

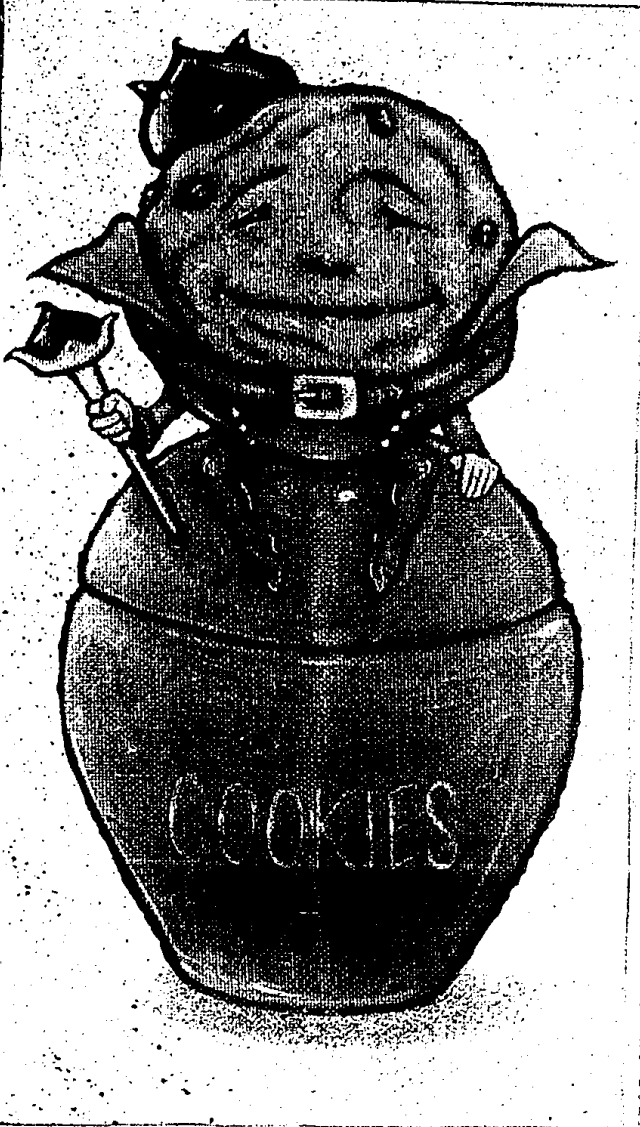
Arborio (an Italian short grain high in starch) was a university town about 30 miles away. Basmati (an aromatic long grain from India) was nonexistent. Even brown rice was relegated to the health food store shelves, and if you wanted rice in five minutes it was Minute Rice - if you could wait 20 minutes, it was Uncle Ben's.

For dinner, rice was served in a casserole. If you adorned it with anything, it was simply a shake of La Choy Soy Sauce. I do remember one time when Dad was laid off and leftover rice was tossed with a few scrambled eggs and some frozen vegetables for a quasi-fried-rice low-cost dinner.

The basic measured water method is the most widely used procedure for producing perfect rice every time. The basic rule of thumb is 1 1/2 cups of boiling water for every cup of rice. Stir, reduce the heat to a simmer, cover and cook 20 minutes. Brown rice needs a two-for-one ratio (2 cups water to 1 cup rice) and cooking time increases to about 40-45 minutes. Wild rice, which plumps more than a Ball Park hotdog, needs 2 1/2 cups boiling water to 1 cup rice and about 40-45 minutes to cook.

IF THE OVEN is going strong, you can do the unlimited water method for producing perfect rice every time. The basic rule of thumb is 1 1/2 cups of boiling water for every cup of rice. Stir, reduce the heat to a simmer, cover and cook 20 minutes. Brown rice needs a two-for-one ratio (2 cups water to 1 cup rice) and cooking time increases to about 40-45 minutes. Wild rice, which plumps more than a Ball Park hotdog, needs 2 1/2 cups boiling water to 1 cup rice and about 40-45 minutes to cook.

Any way you look at it, rice is a crowd pleaser. What better way to stretch your food dollar and prepare something a little different to accentuate tonight's dinner than by cooking rice.

THE BEST  
Chocolate Chip  
COOKIEBy Gori Rinschler  
Special writer

THE CHOCOLATE chip cookie is undoubtedly one of life's simple pleasures. It is best loved not only because it tastes so good but because it brings to mind old-fashioned childhood memories and pleasant family times.

Considered to be America's favorite cookie, the chocolate chip is relatively new. You will not find a recipe in any cookbook written prior to 1930.

It was shortly after that when Ruth and Kenneth Wakefield opened their Toll House restaurant and inn in Whitman, Mass. Ruth baked all the desserts for the Toll House including the cookies. One day while preparing a batch of Butter Drop-Doo cookies, she ran out of nuts and substituted chopped semisweet chocolate.

As you have guessed, the cookie was marvelous, and word spread throughout the land about her discovery. As the story goes, Wakefield later contacted Nestle and asked the company to score its chocolate bars to make it easier to chop when adding chocolate to cookie recipes. Nestle agreed and asked if it could print her recipe on the wrapper.

NINE YEARS LATER, the Nestle company developed the chocolate chip as we know it today. Wakefield sold all legal rights to the use of the Toll House trademark to Nestle. According to authors Larry and Honey Zisman of "The 47 Best Chocolate Chip Cookies in the World," Nestle lost its exclusive rights to the Toll House trademark in 1987, and toll house is now a generic or descriptive term for a cookie.

The chocolate chip cookie of the '90s has taken on many different descriptions based on the variety of chocolate chips, such as mint, butterscotch, white, chunks and dries, as well as the addition of cocoa, melted chocolate, oatmeal and ground nuts to the batter. Cookbook author Judith Olney likes to use one-half cup of bran in the basic Toll House recipe in place of one-half cup of walnuts to add some fiber. Many cookie shops such as the Blue Chip Cookie Company in San Francisco prefer a white chocolate chunk and macadamia combination. No matter what your preference, the key to creating a great chocolate chip cookie is simple. So put on your apron, warm up the oven and get ready to enjoy the best chocolate chip cookie ever.

Research shows that most professional cooks prefer to use a recipe based on six tablespoons of sugar for every cup of flour, as written in Wakefield's original Toll House recipe. The amount of fat is generally eight tablespoons per cup of flour. Once you have discovered a reliable recipe, the secret to making fantastic cookies is in the freshness and quality of the ingredients.

Shopping for quality ingredients is not difficult once you know what to look for. Most recipes recommend butter for tenderizing instead of margarine. Different brands of margarine contain varying amounts of water, anywhere from 40 to 60 percent, resulting in a very different texture cookie than one baked with butter. After selecting the freshest eggs, check to make sure they are size large and are at room temperature before using.

SOME RECIPES suggest unbleached flour while others do not indicate a preference. Unbleached flour generally contains a higher amount of protein, absorbing more liquid than bleached flour and results in a tougher cookie.

Chocolate is a very important ingredient in a chocolate chip cookie recipe. All brands of chocolate are interchangeable in a recipe, but some are better than others. I prefer Swiss chocolates such as Tobler or Lindt, which are sold only in bars and must be hand chopped for cookies. Mrs. Field's semisweet chocolate chips have a smooth, rich flavor and give very good results. These chips can be found in most grocery stores.

The most important pieces of equipment for making cookies are heavy-duty aluminum cookie sheets and a mercury oven thermometer. Ovens of all types, whether they are electric or gas, even brand new, are inaccurate. The easiest way to run a good cookie recipe is overbaking due to high oven temperatures.

It's worth the investment to purchase a mercury thermometer. Keep it in the oven during baking. These thermometers can be found in most hardware, department and kitchenware stores.

Heavy-duty shiny aluminum cookie sheets with low sides are best for evenly baked cookies. Some recipes specify grease cookie sheet before baking others don't. Generally greasing a cookie sheet causes a cookie to better to spread more during the baking process. Too much greasing can cause a cookie to burn around the edges. A light vegetable spray such as Pam works well for this technique.

She's got the line  
on kitchen gadgetsBy Arlene Funke  
Special writer

All eyes watch as Ginger Broome peels, cores and slices a plump Granny Smith apple.

In a three-in-one process, using a special tool, Broome has a stack of perfect apple rings.

"Will you look at that?" exclaims a woman watching the demonstration. Broome places the apples onto pieces of sugar-cookie dough, grates on some fresh lemon peel and tosses on a streusel topping. Within minutes, the group will enjoy a fresh-from-the-oven apple Kuchen and other delicious goodies prepared by Derolhea Broome of Canton "Ginger" to everyone who knows her.

Broome, a 39-year-old homemaker and mother of four children, is a demonstrator-saleswoman for Pampered Chef, a line of high-quality kitchen tools sold at home parties.

"Some items are available in stores," said Broome. "What they are gaining is a demonstration and how to care for the products." Pampered Chef, based in Illinois, was launched 11 years ago by Doris Christopher, a homemaker with a degree in home economics.

The line features more than 125

items, ranging from peelers and cutters for around \$1 each to ceramic baking stones in the \$25 range.

THERE ARE gadgets to cut and crimp bite-sized appetizers, implements to make fancy veggie shapes and pancake molds in three shapes - dinosaur, heart and teddy bear. All carry a guarantee of one year, some carry longer guarantees.

The parties are designed to be educational. Broome, one of a handful of Pampered Chef demonstrators in the Detroit suburbs, does a show-and-tell using the company's peelers, dicers, molds and baking pans.

"Many of the items have two and more uses," Broome said. Most people don't have time to go to a specialty store to buy high-quality items."

Today's group of a dozen women have gathered in the Bedford home of Ruth Monstar. Most are friends of Monstar and meet regularly to socialize and make crafts.

The guests will enjoy a mouth-watering lunch of mini egg rolls, a cheesy spinach loaf encased in light crust, spinach salad and a frothy gelatin ambrosia served in fancy orange cups.

"Min, we're getting a free cooking lesson," someone comments, watching Broome assemble the ingredients for the spinach loaf. The recipe uses



Ginger Broome shows a carousel of tools during group demonstration in a customer's home in Bedford.

refrigerated crescent rolls, frozen spinach souffle, shredded mozzarella, water chestnuts and cooked rice.

A delicious aroma fills the room as a batch of mini cinnamon rolls bakes on a Pampered Chef deep dish baker. The recipe uses canned crescent rolls, cinnamon, margarine and

nut. It is topped with a powdered sugar glaze.

HER PRESENTATION is low key. Broome explains that the unglazed ceramic baking pieces are designed to absorb moisture and provide even heat. The food stays warm for several minutes after it is re-

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moved from the oven. You grease the stone only the first time you use it, Broome said. You don't use soap on this.

Because Monstar has provided many of the ingredients for today's demonstration, she carries 15 items. Some points toward free merchandise. She chooses a vegetable peeler, a paring knife, a lemon zester and a tool to make quick, perfectly shaped tartlets. "They are very fine products," Monstar said.

Broome became a Pampered Chef saleswoman several months ago after holding her own party. She later was recruited by Karla Thomas of Brighton, a Pampered Chef manager.

This fits, Broome said. "With a husband and four kids, it has to fit."

Broome, who enjoys cooking, invested \$100 for a kit of Pampered Chef products and recipes. She has done demonstrations at lunchtime in the evening and for Saturday brunch.

One hostess decided to hold a party at her office, which has a kitchen. Broome hopes to be doing parties for couples.

"It seems to apply to everyone," Broome said. "The response has been so good." For more information about Pampered Chef, call 435-6406.