

Rice Salad

375 g (12 oz) long-grain rice	1 level tablespoon finely chopped fresh chives
Salt	5-6 spring onions or 1 large mild onion, finely chopped
2 firm tomatoes, chopped	6 tablespoons olive oil
1 large cucumber, cubed, sprinkled with salt and allowed to drain for ½ hour	Juice of 1 lemon
½ hot dried chilli pepper, finely chopped	Black pepper, and salt if necessary
3 level tablespoons finely chopped parsley	Pinch of cayenne pepper (optional)
3 level tablespoons finely chopped mint, or 1 teaspoon dried crushed mint	Black olives and sliced cucumber, to garnish (optional)

Cook the rice according to one of the recipes for plain rice (pages 401-3), using oil instead of butter and salt to taste as directed. While it is still hot, add all the remaining ingredients and mix well.

This rather delicious salad can be garnished beautifully with black olives and pale green cucumber slices.

1. A Syrian Way

2 teacups long-grain rice	Salt
2 teacups water	60-90 g (2-3 oz) butter

To wash the rice, pour boiling water over it in a bowl and stir well for a few seconds. Pour into a sieve or a small-holed colander and rinse under cold running water until the water runs clear. Drain well.

Bring 2 cups water to the boil in a pan with a little salt to taste. Throw in the drained rice, bring to the boil again, and boil vigorously for 2 minutes. Cover the pan with a tight-fitting lid and simmer very gently, undisturbed, for about 20 minutes, until the water has been absorbed and the rice is cooked. It should be tender and separate, with little holes all over the surface. Turn off the heat, and allow the rice to rest for about 10 minutes.

Melt the butter (by today's standards this is rather a large quantity which you may prefer to reduce) in a saucepan and put it evenly all over the rice. Let it rest again, covered, for 3 minutes longer, until the melted fat has been absorbed by the rice.

2. A Lebanese Way

The ingredients and quantities are the same as above (although some people use half as much water).

Wash the rice as above and drain well. Put the 2 teacups water, salt and butter or margarine in a saucepan, and bring to the boil. Throw in the rice and boil vigorously for 2 minutes. Cover the pan tightly and simmer very gently, undisturbed, for about 20 minutes, until the rice is tender and fluffy, and little holes have appeared all over the surface. Turn off the heat and allow to rest for 10 minutes before serving.

3. An Egyptian Way

The ingredients and quantities are the same as in the first recipe, although Jewish households like my own used oil instead of butter.

Wash and drain the rice as above. Allow the rice grains to dry out as much as possible. (In this method the rice can be left unwashed if you wish.)

Heat the butter or oil in a saucepan. Throw in the rice and fry it gently for a minute or so, until the grains are translucent and well

coated with fat. Add the water and salt to taste. Bring to the boil vigorously for 2 minutes, then simmer gently, tightly covered and undisturbed, for about 20 minutes, until the rice is tender and the characteristic little holes have appeared on the surface. Never stir