

## **PILAF METHOD OF COOKING RICE**

Susan Denzer, Chef and Culinary Consultant

Love + Craft Kitchen, LLC

[www.loveandcraftkitchen.com](http://www.loveandcraftkitchen.com)

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In France, “pilaf” refers to the method of cooking in which food is sautéed in fat before any liquid is added. This method works extremely well for grains as it allows them to absorb the liquid and any aromatics more fully producing a more flavorful dish with a fluffy texture.

Basmati and Jasmine rice work well for making rice pilaf with the “brown” variety providing more whole grain benefits. NOTE: if using white basmati instead of brown, reduce the liquid to 1 1/2 cups and the cooking time to 18 – 20 minutes.

Makes approximately 4 servings; Cook Time: 40 - 50 minutes

### **INGREDIENTS**

1 tablespoon olive oil

1 cup brown basmati rice (or brown jasmine rice), rinsed with cool water and drained well

2 cups chicken or vegetable stock, broth or water

1/4 teaspoon dried thyme (or 1 teaspoon fresh thyme leaves) - optional

1 small bay leaf – optional

Optional garnish – chopped fresh herbs, slivered or sliced almonds, chopped dried fruit (raisins, craisins, cherries)

### **DIRECTIONS**

1. Heat oil over medium heat in a 4 qt saucepan. Add the rice, stirring to coat well. Allow the grains to lightly toast, stirring frequently. The grains should begin to look slightly translucent, but not turn brown.
2. Add the liquid (stock, broth or water), thyme and bay leaf if using. Stir gently. Raise heat and bring to a boil, stirring frequently. Cover pot and reduce heat to low (gentle simmer) – do not remove lid or stir. Cook for 40 - 50 minutes, until liquid is absorbed and rice is tender.
3. Remove from heat and allow rice to rest for 5 - 10 minutes. Remove lid and bay leaf; fluff rice with fork and transfer to serving bowl.
4. OPTIONAL - Garnish with a sprinkling of chopped fresh herbs, toasted almonds or chopped dried fruit, if desired.

### **VARIATIONS:**

To change things up, experiment by adding aromatics and other add-ins.

Basic ratio: 1 cup aromatic veggies + 1 cup brown basmati rice + 2 cups water, broth or stock. Canned coconut milk may also be used in place of water, broth, or stock, and pairs well with warm spices and bright herbs.

- sautéed onions, garlic, bell peppers, and/or mushrooms
- roasted, sautéed, or steamed asparagus
- steamed peas / pea pods
- sautéed or steamed green beans
- roasted sweet potatoes
- roasted or steamed cauliflower
- sautéed greens (chopped spinach, collard greens, kale)
- nuts or seeds
- dried fruit (chopped)