

Rice. A Four Letter Word



When I was growing up, the only rice brand I was familiar with was Uncle Ben's. Maybe we also had some long grain, wild rice from Minnesota on our grocery shelves, but that would have been it.

With the proliferation of products available on the shelves at grocery stores these days, the "rice section" at my local store now takes up half an aisle. A long aisle.

I went looking for rice the other day. I have not eaten rice in over five years, so it was quite a surprise for me to learn some of the new offerings. In my big dinner party days, I had come to depend on Arborio rice for my Italian dishes and Basmati rice for my Indian dishes, but I had never heard of things like Kasmati, Texmati, Jasmati, or sushi rice. Of course brown rice has become more popular and you would not believe the number of rice packets containing the extra spices and herbs to make all kinds of processed food side dishes and entrees. It boggled my mind.

I was in the mood to design a new curry dish, so I decided to take a leap and offer a bit of rice as part of the dish assembly. It's optional in my mind. The dish tastes great

without any rice but since it's so traditional to curry dishes I thought I'd jump in and delve a little more into rice options.

First off, how much is a portion? For me, a portion is $\frac{1}{4}$ cup COOKED. The kasmati rice container I bought suggests a portion is $\frac{1}{4}$ cup DRY. That would make about two cups of cooked rice. Each portion would come in at 34 grams of carbs. (Almost all rice comes in at the same amount of carbs, so factor that in). 34 grams of carbs is about $\frac{1}{3}$ – $\frac{1}{2}$ the number of carbs most humans can consume in a day before they start to get fatter. You won't catch me being sucked into cooking a $\frac{1}{4}$ cup dry per person. That's an insane amount of carbohydrate intake in a single ingredient in my meal. I'd rather take my chances with a cupcake! *The average-sized chocolate cupcake with chocolate frosting comes in at 29 grams of carbs.*

Do you see what I am trying to get across, people? It doesn't have to have sugar on the ingredients label to be really dangerous to weight maintenance!

So a quarter cup it is.

And how often would I do it? Maybe once a quarter. I allow myself a pasta entree once a quarter, too.

My solution to most additions to a meal like this is baby spinach. If I grab a big handful (or even a smaller handful) of baby spinach and put it raw into the bottom of the bowl I can be fully satisfied eating my curry with the spinach in the bottom. The hot curry dish heats up the spinach and basically cooks it. BIG YUM.

So as the British would say, "Enjoy a good curry." If I order one in a restaurant I'm going to ask the waiter to leave out the rice. I'll be much happier without it, and so will my waistline.

Cheers,