

## Tastes of Thailand – Hom Mali Rice

An essential component of every Thai meal, rice accompanies all traditional dishes and even appears in some desserts and snacks, such as crispy rice crackers and rice granola bars. Rice flour is used to make delicious noodles found in soups, stir-fry, and many other Thai dishes. As they are gluten-free, rice noodles are ideal substitutes for pasta lovers who are allergic to wheat. Rice flour also is used to create rice paper, used to wrap spring rolls, to make breakfast cereals, and to supplement baby food. Rice is a rich source of carbohydrates, protein, vitamins B1 and B2, niacin, and such minerals as iron, calcium, and phosphorus.



Rice cultivation in Thailand has been traced back at least 5,500 years. Although Thai rice was exported to other Asian countries in the 19<sup>th</sup> century or earlier, it was introduced to the world in 1933, at the World's Grain Contest in Regina, Canada, where it won the top three prizes and other awards. Rice production and rice trade transformed Thailand from a subsistence to a market economy. The world's largest shipper of rice and one of the major rice producers, Thailand exported more than 10 million tons of rice in 2008, according to the Thai Rice Exporters Association, and likely will ship about the same amount in 2010.

The Thai phrase *kin khao*, or “eating rice,” means “to have a meal” or “to eat food.” Rice is served in individual plates, and other dishes are placed in the middle of the table, for all diners to share. Complementary dishes, known as *kab khao*, or “things eaten with rice,” are considered accompaniments to rice, the centerpiece of every Thai meal.

Thais have such reverence for this grain, which is the keystone of the nation's agrarian economy, that stepping on it is considered taboo. Rice always is handled with care. Traditional songs, dances, rites, and rituals reflect the Thai's close bond with rice. A colorful commemoration of the vital role of rice is the Royal Ploughing Ceremony, which has been celebrated for more than 2,500 years. Designed to provide an auspicious beginning to the new planting season, the May event includes a Buddhist ritual, sacred oxen plowing a furrow into which new rice seed, provided by the King, is scattered, and distribution of rice and seed to farmers and villagers.



Thai farmers produce some of the finest rice in the world and grow it in most of the country's provinces. Northeastern Thailand is home to the cream of the crop, **Hom Mali Rice**, which represents about one-fourth of Thai rice exports. When cooked, the well-polished, medium-grain Hom Mali Rice is silky smooth and pure white, like jasmine, with a tender, somewhat sticky texture and a unique fragrance similar to that of the jasmine flower. Brown Hom Mali jasmine rice, which has not gone through the final polishing stage and thus retains its nutritional bran coating, also is available.

Hom Mali is the only indigenous rice in the world with a natural fragrance. Though several other countries have tried to grow this variety, none has succeeded in preserving its unique aroma, texture, and taste.

Found in the finest kitchens from China and Japan to the United States, Hom Mali enjoys an international reputation for its appearance and cooking texture, but most of all, for its subtle yet fragrant aroma.



Look for the seal issued by the Royal Thai Government's Department of Foreign Trade to be sure you are buying authentic Thai Hom Mali Rice. The green and yellow Quality Certification Mark guarantees buyers that they are receiving the top quality fragrant rice grown in Thailand and conforming to the government's highest quality control standards. The right to display this mark is granted only to those producers and exporters who have followed a series of stringent inspections and procedures, and it is consumers' assurance of superior quality, purity, and taste. Avoid the less flavorful, cheaper, imitation "jasmine" rice and select only the best -- Hom Mali Rice with the seal of quality.

### **Cooking Rice**

Before cooking Hom Mali, put the rice in a large bowl and cover it with cold water. Gently swirl the grains between your fingers to wash off excess starch and any rice dust that might have formed during storage. Let the rice settle for a few minutes, then drain off the water by slowly tipping the bowl. Repeat this rinsing step two to three times, until the water is clear. Drain thoroughly, then place the rice in a pot to cook.

Generally, use a ratio of 1 cup of rice to 1 1/2 – 2 cups of water. In a rice cooker, that basically means making sure the rice is covered with water. Because Hom Mali is delicate and tender, it is a "thirsty" grain and needs plenty of water.

If using a microwave, place the Hom Mali Rice and water in a covered container. Cook for 10 minutes on high, then another 10 minutes on medium high. Follow the ratio of 2 cups of rice to 2 1/2 cups of water.

For stove top cooking, place jasmine rice and plenty of water in a pot, close the lid, and cook on high heat until boiling for 1-2 minutes, then reduce the heat and cook for another 10 minutes. Finally, turn down the heat to very low and cook 10-15 minutes more to steam the rice. When the Hom Mali is fully cooked, pour off the excess water and dry out the rice over low heat.

Serve Hom Mali as an accompaniment to your favorite seafood, poultry, meat, or vegetarian dish, or as a replacement for regular rice in soups, risottos, or rice puddings. Be creative, and enjoy it! Following are some sample recipes, showing the wide range of ways to use Hom Mali Rice and suggestions for cooking with this special jasmine rice.

### **Rice Noodle Suggestions**

Although most Thai noodle dishes incorporate fish or meat, it is easy to create vegetarian or vegan versions.

- Use small, flat rice noodles or glass noodles in Thailand's national noodle dish, *Pad Thai*.

- Substitute smaller noodles if you prefer them to the wide rice noodles traditionally stir fried with black soy sauce to make *Pad See Eiw*.
- Enjoy *Rad Nar* (sometimes called gravy noodles) with the usual wide rice noodles or with narrower rice noodles, stir fried with fish sauce, thin soy sauce, and egg, then topped with stir-fried vegetables and meat or shrimp.
- Combine any kind of rice noodles you like with spices and vegetables to create such soups as *Gwai Tiuw* (Thai noodle soup), *Tom Yum* (spicy soup), or *Tom Khai* (coconut-based soup).

## Rice Recipes

### Pineapple Fried Rice (Khaow Phad Sap-pa-rod)

From *Fresh and Tasty*, Royal Thai Government Department of Export Promotion

*Thais use pineapple to provide sweetness and contrasts to other ingredients. In this recipe, the fruit is scooped out to flavor the rice while the shell is a cooking utensil and serving dish. Buy fresh pineapple that feels heavy, without bruises or dark spots.*

#### Ingredients:

- 1 ½ tablespoons vegetable oil
- 2 cloves garlic, chopped
- ½ cup carrots, diced
- 1.2 ounces ham, diced
- 1 tablespoon raisins
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- ½ tsp. salt
- ¼ cup pineapple, diced
- 1 cup Thai Hom Mali Rice, steamed and cooled
- 1 stalk spring onion, chopped
- ¼ tsp. ground pepper

#### Directions:

1. Heat the oil in a sauté pan or wok. When the oil is hot, toss in and stir-fry the chopped garlic until lightly brown.
2. Add carrots and onion and cook till they're soft, stirring frequently.
3. Stir in the ham and raisins and season with salt and sugar.
4. Take a medium-sized pineapple, cut it in half length-wise, and scoop out the fruit.
5. Dice the fruit and save the outer shell for later.
6. Stir the pineapple and rice into the garlic mixture until well-combined.
7. Add spring onions and pepper, and heat the entire mixture.
8. Scoop the fried rice into the pineapple shell and bake in the oven at 325°F for approximately 5 minutes.
9. Place the pineapple on a plate in the center of the table, and use a spoon to scoop out servings.

### **Chicken Stir-Fried with Chilies and Holy Basil (*Pad Ga Phrow Gai*)**

From *Fresh and Tasty*, Royal Thai Government Department of Export Promotion

*You may buy “ready to cook” Ga Phrow sauce at Asian stores and use it instead of the first four ingredients. For a vegetarian version, use mushrooms instead of chicken and light soy sauce instead of fish sauce.*

#### **Ingredients:**

- 1 tablespoon chilies, chopped
- 1 tablespoon garlic, chopped
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 1 tablespoon fish sauce
- 2 cups holy basil
- 4 - 5 ounces chicken fillet, sliced
- Water or chicken stock
- Vegetable oil



#### **Directions:**

1. Fry one cup of holy basil in a deep fryer or deep skillet until crispy. Remove and place on a paper towel to drain the excess oil. Set aside.
2. Heat 1 tablespoon of vegetable oil in a frying pan. Add the chopped garlic and chilies and fry until they are fragrant.
3. Stir in the sliced chicken, turn the heat to high and quickly add the sugar and fish sauce.
4. Add the remaining cup of holy basil and continue stir-frying until the chicken is cooked.
5. If the mixture becomes too dry, add a tablespoon of water or chicken stock.
6. Transfer the mixture to a serving plate and garnish with the crispy holy basil leaves. Serve with steamed Hom Mali Rice and, if you like, a fried egg on top.

### **Roast Chicken Stuffed with Hom Mali Rice**

From “The Great Thai Hom Mali Rice Recipes of the World,”  
Royal Thai Government Department of Foreign Trade

#### **Ingredients:**

- 1 whole roasting or frying chicken
- 3 cups cooked Hom Mali Rice
- 1 ½ cups diced apple
- 1 cup raisins
- 3 tablespoons honey
- 3 teaspoons ground black pepper
- 2 teaspoons garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ½ cup black olives, halved
- 1 ½ teaspoons salt
- 2 tablespoons soy sauce
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil



#### **Directions:**

1. Preheat oven to 360° F while you prepare the ingredients
2. Clean whole chicken, inside and out. Pat dry and rub lightly all over with salt.

3. Mix cooked rice with remaining ingredients.
4. Stuff chicken with rice mixture.
5. Bake at 360° F for 3 hours or until chicken is golden brown and juices run clear.
6. Let chicken stand for 10 minutes before removing rice stuffing.
7. Slice the chicken and serve with the stuffing on the side.

### **Hom Mali Risotto**

From "The Great Thai Hom Mali Rice Recipes of the World,"  
Royal Thai Government Department of Foreign Trade

#### **Ingredients:**

2 cups Hom Mali Rice  
¼ pound of bacon  
¼ pound of sausage of your choice  
¼ cup minced garlic  
½ cup finely chopped onions  
7/8 cup finely chopped carrots  
4 ½ cups finely chopped ripe tomatoes  
3 ½ ounces champignon mushrooms, fresh or  
canned  
1 ½ tablespoons chopped fresh parsley  
2-4 fresh red and green chilies, seeded and minced  
4 ¼ cups of chicken stock and water (half and half)  
Parmesan or pecorino cheese  
Pinch of salt and freshly ground black pepper  
10 teaspoons olive oil



#### **Directions:**

Wash the rice. Drain and leave in colander.  
Warm the chicken stock and water in a pan over low heat.  
Chop bacon finely and slice the sausages into thin pieces.  
If using fresh mushrooms, wipe them with a damp towel to remove any grit. Slice the mushrooms, including the stems, vertically.  
Heat olive oil in a deep saucepan. Sauté garlic, onion, and bacon until brown.  
Add rice, stir to coat the rice with the oil mixture, then add 300 ml chicken stock. Simmer, uncovered, over medium heat for 5-8 minutes, stirring constantly.  
Add carrot, sausage, tomatoes, and 400 ml of chicken stock.  
Continue simmering over medium heat for 15-20 minutes, stirring constantly.  
The rice should not be too dry when cooked. Keep spooning in more stock if needed as you cook.  
Turn off heat and leave covered for another 1-2 minutes.  
Add the chilies and parsley. Season with salt and freshly ground pepper.  
Remove to serving dish. Sprinkle cheese on top and serve hot.

**Sweet and Sour Shrimp (*Pad Preaw Wan Goon*)**  
From “Exploring Thai Flavours,” Thai National Food Institute

**Ingredients:**

6 ounces peeled shrimp  
3/8 cup diced cucumber  
1/4 cup tomato, cut into bite-size pieces  
1/3 cup pineapple  
1/4 cup diced onion  
2 tablespoons vegetable oil, for frying  
3 tablespoons spring onion, cut into inch-long lengths  
3 tablespoons chopped garlic  
3 tablespoons tomato sauce or ketchup  
1 tablespoon fish sauce  
1/2 tablespoon sugar  
1/4 cup stock

**Directions:**

1. Fry the shrimp quickly, until it turns pink, and set aside.
2. Fry the cucumber, tomato, pineapple, and diced onion and set aside.
3. Mix the seasonings well – the tomato sauce or ketchup, fish sauce, sugar, and stock
4. Heat the oil in a frying pan. Fry the garlic until it becomes aromatic. Quickly add the vegetables, shrimp, the sauce and half of the green onions and stir-fry. Don't over cook the vegetables – they should remain crunchy.
5. Serve on a plate, as an accompaniment to Hom Mali rice. Garnish the shrimp dish with the rest of the spring onions.

**Baked Rice Pudding**

From “The Great Thai Hom Mali Rice Recipes of the World,”  
Royal Thai Government Department of Foreign Trade

**Ingredients;**

1/2 cup uncooked Hom Mali Rice  
1 cup water  
3/4 cup sugar  
1 tablespoon corn starch  
Pinch of salt  
2 eggs, separated  
2 1/2 cups milk  
1 tablespoon lemon juice  
1/2 cup raisins



**Directions:**

1. Preheat oven to 350° F.
2. In a medium saucepan, stir together rice and water. Bring to a quick boil, stirring once or twice. Reduce heat, cover and simmer for 15 minutes without removing the cover. All water should be absorbed.
3. In a mixing bowl, combine ½ cup of sugar, corn starch and salt. Beat egg yolks slightly. Add yolks and milk to sugar mixture and beat. Stir in cooked rice, lemon juice, and raisins.
4. Pour into ungreased casserole dish. Place the dish in a pan of very hot water, about 1 inch deep. Bake for about 1 ½ hours, stirring occasionally or until pudding is creamy and most of the liquid is absorbed. Remove casserole from oven but not from the pan.
5. Increase oven temperature to 400° F. Beat egg whites until foamy. Continue beating while adding in ¼ cup of sugar, 1 tablespoon at a time. Beat until stiff and glossy.
6. Drop by spoonfuls onto pudding. Bake 8-10 minutes or until meringue is golden brown.
7. Serve warm.

These are just samples of the many ways you Hom Mali Rice may be incorporated into appetizers, main courses and desserts, both authentic Thai style and every day food. Find more recipes in Thai and Asian cookbooks in stores and magazines and check out the many Thai recipes on the Internet.

Following are a few Web sites you may want to explore.

<http://www.thaikitchen.com/ricenoodles.html#>  
[www.thaitable.com](http://www.thaitable.com)  
<http://thai-food.suite101.com/writers.cfm>  
<http://www.food-recipe-cooking.com/thai-food-01.htm>  
<http://importfood.com/recipes.html>