



USA Rice: The Perfect Partner for Healthy School Meals





Rice is a familiar, well-loved ingredient that appeals to students of all ages while offering essential nutrients and health benefits. U.S.-grown rice can enhance school menus with its affordability, adaptability, and nutritional value.

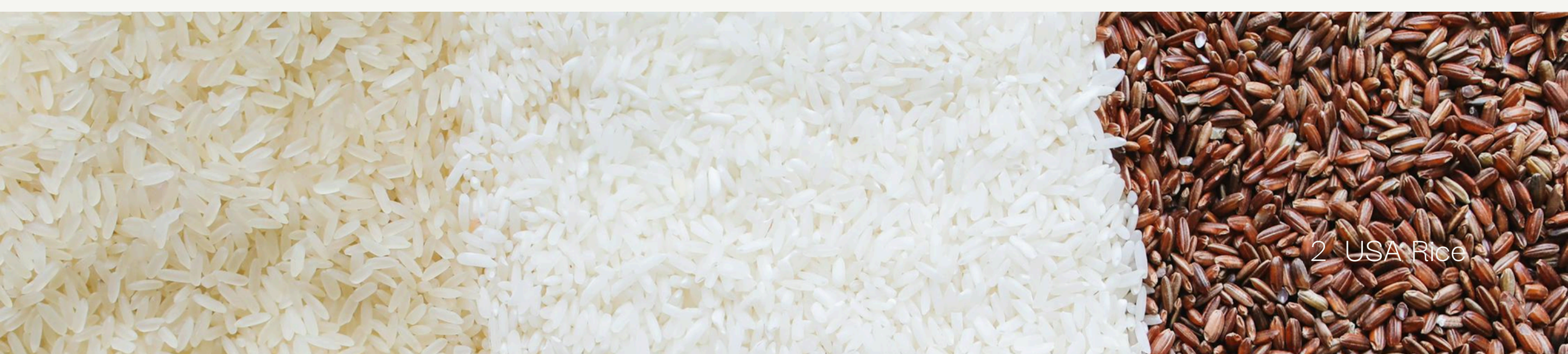
U.S.-Grown Rice is Nutritious

U.S.-grown brown (whole grain) and enriched ¹ (white rice) are documented in national surveys to supply fiber and more than 15 essential vitamins and minerals including folate, B vitamins, ²⁻⁵ potassium, magnesium, selenium, iron, and zinc.

U.S.-grown rice is naturally sodium, cholesterol, gluten, and GMO-free.

All About Rice

- White rice and brown rice come from the same kernel of rice.
- The bran and germ are removed from white rice, whereas both are left intact on brown rice.





Rice is a Simple, Popular, Real Ingredient in Healthy Meals

Rice is a simple, natural ingredient that provides essential nutrients, health benefits, and flavor that works across the spectrum of global cuisines and diet insensitivities.

Rice is an Important Base for Many Other Healthy Foods

Rice helps schools meet their grain, vegetables, and meat/meat alternate crediting needs. Meat, vegetables, salads, and legumes are documented as the top foods served with rice.⁶ The 2020 DGA notes that 40% of vegetables are eaten as part of a mixed dish.⁷

Rice Pairs Perfectly with Plant-Based Proteins

U.S.-grown rice as part of plant-based meals in schools can help ensure complete proteins in these meals.

- Plant-based proteins pair easily with rice as rice is a rich source of amino acids, especially due to its content of lysine, methionine, and cysteine.⁸



“Rice is naturally gluten-free, cholesterol-free, and hypoallergenic.”⁸

Rice is Affordable

Rice is budget-friendly, locally grown, and widely accessible for school meals.

White Rice is Appealing and Familiar

Research shows that white rice is familiar and appealing for its aroma, appearance, and texture.⁹

White rice is a staple food for cultural dishes in the U.S. and around the globe.

The appeal and familiarity of white rice can help ensure plant-based meals are popular⁹ with students leading to less food waste.



Rice & Shine

K-12 Recipe Winners



Breakfast Baked Rice

By Amanda Waits



This casserole-like dish has a sweetness and texture similar to oatmeal. It is delicious in a bowl with milk poured around it almost like a soft granola.



Rice Pudding Parfait

By Ron Jones



This dish is similar to popular breakfast yogurt parfaits, substituting the yogurt for scratch made rice pudding.



School Breakfast Fried Rice

By Catherine Easton



The breakfast fried rice takes a new turn on a traditional fried rice adding bacon and garlic as well as other spices to make it a new favorite for all students.



Berry Wild Rice

By Dawn Kelley



Honorable Mention

This Berry Wild Rice recipe provides the perfect mix of healthy flavors and textures and will keep your students fueled throughout the school day.

PB&J Rice Pudding



Jambalaya



[Click here for more rice recipes!](#)

Research Supports the Health Benefits of Rice

- Whole grains, such as U.S.-grown brown rice and wild rice, help overall health.^{10,11} Diets containing whole grains have been associated with lower risk of cardiovascular disease, overweight and obesity, type 2 diabetes, and certain cancers.⁷
- Enriched grains such as white rice, play a protective role when it comes to heart health. Enriched grains contribute essential B vitamins, thiamin, niacin, and riboflavin, folic acid, and iron.^{12,13}
- A 2024 cross-sectional and longitudinal study of around 1 million people from across 141 countries found that the traditional Japanese diet pattern (containing white rice, fish, soy, vegetables, and eggs) may be associated with lower rates of hypertension and lower systolic blood pressure.¹⁴
- A 2024 cohort study of more than 2800 Costa Ricans aged 60+ found that the traditional diet, consisting mainly of white rice and beans, was strongly associated with lower all-cause mortality. Among the males, rice itself was linked to lower all-cause mortality.¹⁵
- Data showed that rice drives consumption of other healthy foods among kids. Vegetables, lean proteins, and legumes were identified as the top foods consumed alongside rice for kids aged 0-17.¹⁸
- An examination of vegetable intake among Vietnamese school children showed that combining leftover vegetables with rice and protein-rich foods enhanced the taste and sensory experience of the meal and led to a greater intake of vegetables and healthier eating habits without increasing meal costs.¹⁹

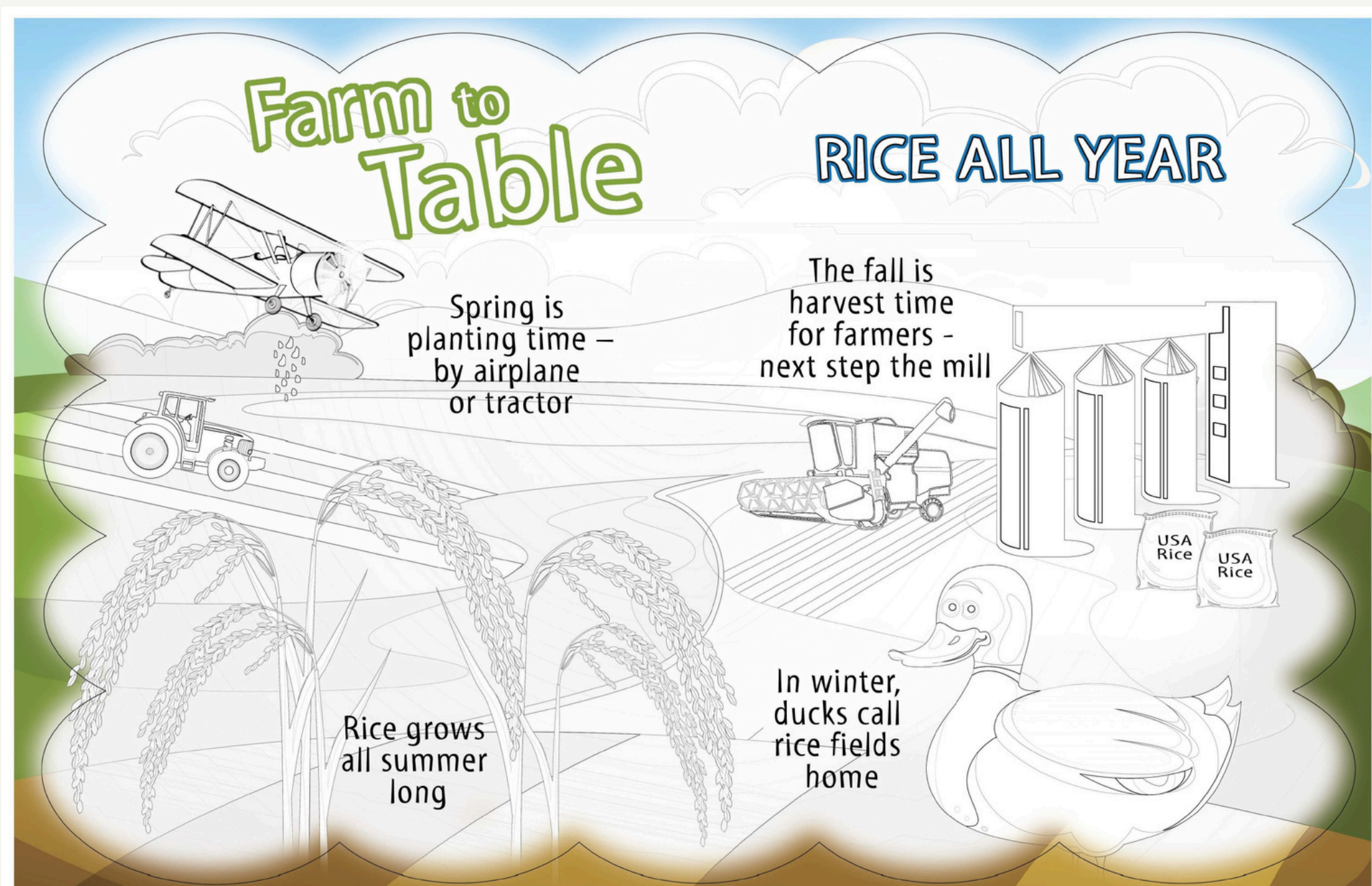


“U.S.-grown brown rice and fortified white rice supply nutrients that often run low in diets including folic acid and iron.”^{16,17}

Classroom Materials



These colorful, kid-friendly posters are perfect for elementary classrooms! “Brown Rice to the Rescue” teaches students about health benefits of brown rice through fun visuals, while “Where Does Rice Grow?” features a U.S. map that highlights the six rice-growing states and shares a fun fact about rice and the environment.



Perfect for children aged 2-6, this coloring sheet is one of four pages that tell the farm to table story of U.S.-grown rice. Featuring a fun, seasonal farm scene, it helps young kids learn about how rice grows, from planting to harvest.



Get a closer look at how U.S.-grown rice supports healthy, delicious meals in schools across the country! These short videos highlight the versatility, nutrition and student appeal of rice in K-12 meals.

Rice to the Rescue: Flex Menu



Rice to the Rescue: School Breakfast





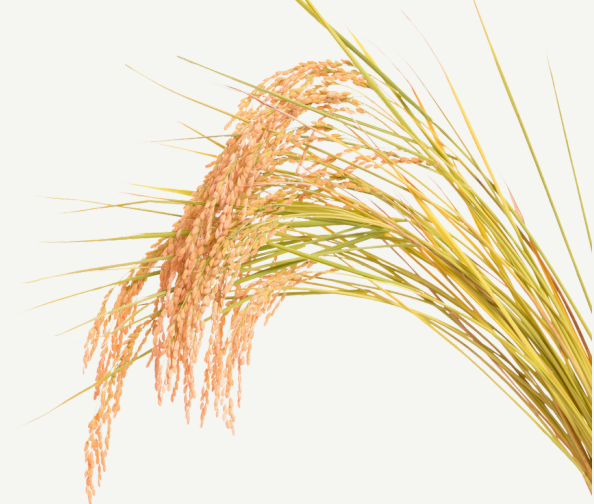
About USA Rice

USA Rice is the global advocate and trade association for all segments of the U.S. rice industry working to ensure the health and vitality of a unified U.S. rice industry. With more than 20 billion pounds of sustainably grown rice produced each year on family farms, U.S.-grown rice accounts for 80% of all the rice consumed domestically. USA Rice encourages greater use of U.S. rice through promotional programming and partnerships across consumer, foodservice, and nutrition audiences.

For more recipes and resources, visit us at www.thinkrice.com



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