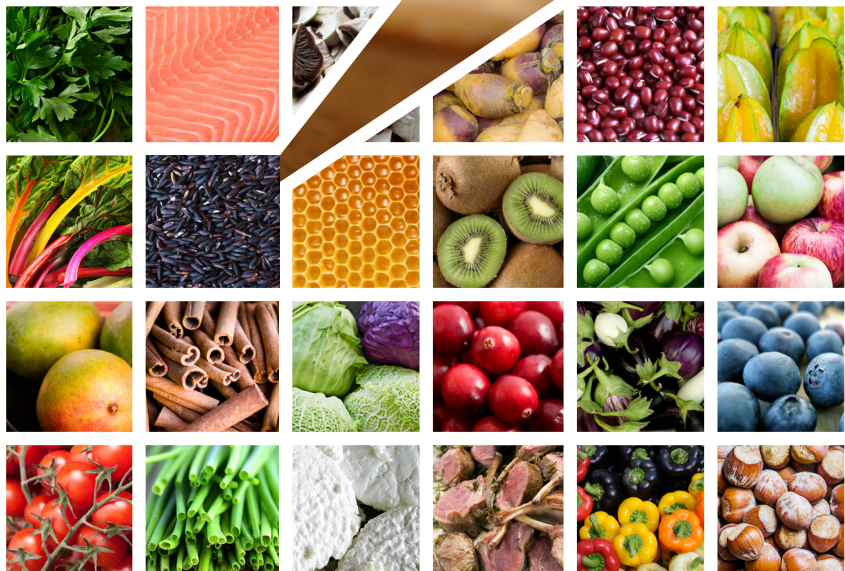




Ingredient of the Month



Presented by American Culinary Federation
Education Foundation

Black rice, also known as forbidden rice, comes from the same rice plant species, *oryza sativa*, as other colored rice. Similar to brown rice, black rice is unrefined and denser than white rice. The black color comes from anthocyanins retained in the outer bran layer; the inner kernel is white. Cooked black rice has a chewy texture with a rich, earthy, nutty flavor. Depending on the variety, it can belong to the short-, medium- or long-grain rice category, and is used in both sweet and savory dishes.

Black rice is an ancient grain, meaning that it was grown in early history and hasn't changed much over the millennia. It is believed to have been cultivated in China more than 4,000

years ago. It was cultivated in small amounts and eaten only by emperors because it promised a long life of good health, which earned it the name "forbidden." Black rice was introduced to the United States in the 1990s and is gaining in popularity as a nutritious, flavorful ancient grain.

Black rice is considered a superfood and is gluten-free. It contains one of the highest levels of the antioxidant anthocyanin found in food. Anthocyanins help improve memory, enhance vision and act as an anti-inflammatory. Black rice is a good source of protein for strong muscles and fiber for digestion and weight control. It contains iron to help keep blood strong and healthy.

Healthy Ingredient Contribution

Values from draxe.com based on black rice, cooked, boiled, without salt, 1/2 cup.

ANTIOXIDANTS: Black rice is high in substances that have antioxidant properties. Antioxidants protect against free radicals that cause aging, cancer and disease. Antioxidants help support memory function and coordination.

ANTHOCYANINS: The outer bran layer of black rice is full of anthocyanins, a plant compound that gives black rice its dark complexion. Anthocyanins help improve memory, enhance vision and act as an anti-inflammatory.

PROTEIN: One serving of black rice offers 10 percent of the daily recommended value of protein, an important macronutrient needed to build and repair tissues and muscles. It plays a role in the production and action of enzymes, involved in most body functions.

FIBER: Black rice provides 8 percent of the daily recommended value of fiber. Soluble fibers help control weight by making the stomach feel full. Insoluble fibers add bulk to the diet and help prevent constipation.

IRON: One serving of black rice offers 4 percent of the daily recommended value of iron, which is an essential mineral that helps keep blood strong and healthy. Blood carries oxygen from the lungs to the rest of the body, and without enough oxygen, the body becomes fatigued, resulting in decreased brain function and a weaker immune system.

Types and Varieties

BLACK JAPONICA RICE is a combination of black short-grain rice and mahogany medium-grain rice grown together in the same field. It has an earthy flavor with a mild, sweet spiciness.

BLACK GLUTINOUS RICE, also known as **black sticky rice**, is a short-grain rice with a sweet flavor and sticky texture. The grains are unevenly colored and are often used to make sweet dishes in Asia.

ITALIAN BLACK RICE is a long-grain rice that combines Chinese black rice with Italian rice. It has a rich, buttery flavor.

THAI BLACK JASMINE RICE is a medium-grain rice from Thailand that combines Chinese black rice with jasmine rice. It has a subtle floral aroma when cooked.

Selecting and Storing

- When selecting rice, make sure the package is free of moisture and check the expiration date, as the rice bran contains oils that can go rancid.
- Fresh black rice will have a nutty aroma. Avoid rice that has a bitter aroma.
- Uncooked black rice can be stored in an airtight container in a dry, dark, cool place for 3-6 months. Shelf life can be extended by 6-12 months in the refrigerator and 12-18 months in the freezer.
- Cooked rice should be covered tightly and can be stored in the refrigerator for no more than three days. It can be frozen for up to three months.

Culinary Uses

- Soaking grains in water for several hours before cooking makes them easier to digest and enhances nutrition absorption.
- As a general rule, use two cups of liquid for every one cup of rice. Bring to a boil and simmer until liquid is absorbed and black rice is tender with a chewy texture, 20-40 minutes.
- Try black rice risotto or mix black rice with other grains for a colorful grain salad. Combine black rice with coconut milk and honey for a nutritious breakfast porridge.
- Grind black rice kernels in a food processor and sprinkle over foods for an antioxidant boost.

Interesting Facts

- Wild rice may resemble black rice in appearance, but it is actually a member of the grass family, not the rice family.
- Black rice turns the cooking water purple.
- The pigments in black rice bran can be extracted and used as a healthier food coloring alternative.



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