

# California Rice

THE ENVIRONMENTAL CROP



Water for Sacramento Valley rice fields provides twice the benefits—growing America's sushi rice and providing habitat for nearly 250 wildlife species. Rice fields also show promise in providing food and habitat to benefit the dwindling salmon population.



## California Rice—The Environmental Crop



## Cast Iron Chicken and California Rice

Courtesy of Savory Café, Woodland

## Ingredients

Serves 6–8

- 1 Whole chicken
- 2 cups California Jasmine (California Basmati also works great)
- 2 Shallots—small dice
- 6–8 Sweet peppers—whole
- 2 Carrots—small dice
- ¼ cup Peas
- pinch Saffron
- 1 tsp Turmeric
- ½ tsp Cumin
- 1 Preserved lemon (just peel no white—fine chop)
- 1 bunch Cilantro
- ½ cup Oil divided
- 3½ cups Chicken stock
- To taste Salt
- To taste Pepper



*Chef Juan and Toby Barajas*

# Cast Iron Chicken and California Rice

*Courtesy of Savory Café, Woodland*

## Cooking Instructions

**Prep time:** 20 min.    **Cook time:** 30–35 min.

### Notes

This recipe can be made in a cast iron skillet or a dutch oven, as long as the pan is a heavy bottom pan.

### Preparing the Chicken

Cut the chicken in quarters or eighths. You may also butterfly the chicken, leaving the breast whole and cutting the spine.

Make sure the chicken is dry. Season with salt and pepper to your liking and place it on a rack or a plate to let it come to room temperature.

In a 12-inch cast iron skillet (preheated to medium-high heat), add enough oil to brown the seasoned chicken, skin side down. Once it's golden brown flip to its back side to par-cook the back. Start with the leg and thigh since they take a bit longer to cook. Place the browned chicken on a clean plate to rest so you can start the rice.

Add a bit more oil to the pan to start browning your rice. Cook the rice in the pan until it starts getting a golden color about 5–10 minutes.

Next, add the shallots, cook for another 3 minutes, then add your cumin, turmeric and a pinch of salt. Cook for 3 more minutes to cook the spices into the rice. Add the saffron, preserved lemon, carrots, peas and chicken stock. Wait until the stock starts boiling and mix the rice together, making sure it doesn't stick to the bottom. You can add the sweet peppers at this point, or fire roast them and put them back to the rice whole for presentation and an extra burst of sweet smoky flavor. Taste the broth of the rice and adjust seasoning.

Put the chicken back into the rice as it boils. Turn the heat down to low and cover the skillet with a lid, parchment paper or foil. Cook on low heat until rice is done and liquid is absorbed.

Cut most of the cilantro stems off, season with a bit of salt and extra virgin olive oil (citrus if you have it) and bunch it on top of the chicken before serving for extra flavor and freshness to the dish. **Enjoy!**