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brown rice pudding

a bounty from the earth

by Buffy Owens

Recipe

- 2 cups cream
- 1½ cups milk
- 4 eggs
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon nutmeg
- 2 tablespoons vanilla
- ½ cup brown sugar
- ⅔ cup uncooked brown rice
- 1 medium parsnip (peeled, cut into small pieces)
- 1 cup dried fruit (nuts are optional)



Place the eggs, milk, and cream in a bowl and whisk until well incorporated. Add the salt, spices, vanilla, and brown sugar. Whisk again. Now add the uncooked brown rice, chopped parsnips, and dried fruit. Stir. The parsnips will float to the top. Place in a crock or deep pan that has been sprayed with a spray release. Bake for about an hour and a half until a toothpick or table knife comes out clean. The baking time will vary depending on your oven and the depth of your crock. Let set for 30 minutes. The pudding can be served hot or cold. Enjoy these bounties from our Earth.



Buffy Owens graduated from Colorado State University, and began her career in Early Childhood almost 40 years ago. She has been an executive of two child care companies and now lives in Hawaii where she is the Vice President and Preschool Division Director for Kama'aina Kids. Buffy has a passion for the art of catering and food development and display and is a co-owner of a catering company. She enjoys, and thinks it is very important, to involve children in the beauty and flavors of foods.

The holiday season is one rich with memories and traditions. As the smell of fall is in the air and in many parts of our nation the leaves begin to drift to the ground, we gather together to enjoy the rich traditions that have brought us comfort and memories for many years. Aromas from the kitchen trigger thoughts of family feasts, gatherings, and helping children learn recipes

that embrace our family traditions and cultures. Cooking with your children is a treasured time and the memory lasts forever.

The ingredients in Brown Rice Pudding represent one of those scents that make me close my eyes and remember my childhood on those cold St. Louis winter days. And, though I now feel the gentle island breezes instead, that scent always takes me back. I wanted to incorporate some additional items into a traditional rice pudding so I played around with

root vegetables and dried fruit and using one of my favorite ingredients, which is brown rice rather than white rice. These ingredients are nutritious, taste good, and incorporate well into cooked dishes.

Also, I like to use *uncooked* brown rice as I think when you make a recipe with rice that has already been cooked, you have left a large portion of the nutrients in the water that the rice was cooked in and not on your plate.

Parsnips are a root vegetable that are related to carrots. They are good for you, are virtually fat free and cholesterol free, and provide sweetness to the dish. They can be used to reduce the amount of sugar used.

Dried fruit is another favorite as it allows you to pick items that you like or try new items; and dried fruit is nutritious. It's not just about raisins anymore! In addition, this recipe allows children to do almost all of the work, which is always a goal of mine. The children can count out the eggs, crack and place them in the bowl, measure the brown rice, sugar, vanilla, spices, and dried fruit. The children can help measure the milk and cream and stir the mixture.

The adults should peel and chop the parsnips, help to measure the milk and cream, and take the dish in and out of the oven.

Variations: There is so much that you can do when eggs are incorporated into

a baked dish. If you wanted to make this a more savory dish, omit the cinnamon, sugar, and vanilla and put in something like basil and garlic, or cumin and cilantro with shredded beef, or poultry spices and shredded chicken. Eggs, when baked, help to bind a dish together and serve as a medium for you to experiment and try a variety of flavors. Once you understand the basic relationships of various food items and what they do to a recipe, the ability to use your imagination is wide open. Pick your child's favorite food and incorporate that into the dish. Use last night's leftovers or several cups of fresh or frozen vegetables. The rice will provide density to your dish and the eggs will bind it. The rest is up to your imagination!



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