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Rice is not only one of the world's most important foods; it is a part of many international and regional American cuisines because it is so versatile. The following recipe illustrates just one of the ways U.S.-grown rice can be used with delicious success.

USA RICE FEDERATION
4301 North Fairfax Drive, Suite 425
Arlington, VA 22203-1616
USA
(703) 236-2300 PHONE
(703) 236-2301 FAX

Smoky Mountain Chicken and Rice Casserole

MAKES SIX SERVINGS



INGREDIENTS

- Vegetable cooking spray
- 1 cup sour cream
- 1 (10 3/4-ounce) can condensed cream of chicken soup
- 2 chipotle peppers in adobo sauce, finely chopped
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon pepper
- 3 cups cooked rice
- 2 cups shredded cooked chicken
- 1 cup shredded smoked cheddar cheese

DIRECTIONS

- Preheat oven to 400 degrees.
- Lightly coat 13 x 9 x 2-inch baking dish with vegetable cooking spray.
- In large bowl, stir together sour cream, soup, chipotles, salt and pepper until well blended. Stir in rice, chicken and cheese. Spoon into baking dish.
- Bake uncovered in preheated oven 20 to 25 minutes, until edges of casserole are bubbly.
- Turn oven to broil setting and lightly brown casserole.

FAST FACTS

- Americans consume an average of 25 pounds of rice per person per year.
- A single half-cup serving of rice is sodium-, cholesterol- and gluten-free, with only 100 calories per serving.
- Brown rice is a 100 percent whole grain. Studies have shown that eating whole grains may reduce the risk of heart disease and other illnesses.

RICE EATERS ARE HEALTHIER EATERS:

Recent research shows that people who eat rice consume less sugar and saturated fat, have a lower risk of high blood pressure and obesity, and may be less likely to develop heart disease and type II diabetes.

SOURCE: HEALTHY RICE EATERS STUDY 2007

NUTRITION FACTS

- Calories: 340
- Cholesterol: 75 mg
- Total Carbohydrates: 32 g
- Protein: 24 g
- Total Fat: 13 g
- Sodium: 720 mg
- Dietary Fiber: 0 g

Meal Part: Main Dish

Preparation: Quick and Easy, Casserole

Main Ingredients: Poultry, Cheese

Cuisine Type: Mexican