Preparing Pasta, Rice, and Grains

National Food Service Management Institute
The University of Mississippi
Culinary Techniques for Healthy School Meals

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The National Food Service Management Institute was authorized by Congress in 1989 and established in 1990 at The University of Mississippi in Oxford. The Institute operates under a grant agreement with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service.

**PURPOSE**

The purpose of the National Food Service Management Institute is to improve the operation of child nutrition programs through research, education and training, and information dissemination. The Administrative Offices and Divisions of Information Services and Education and Training are located in Oxford. The Division of Applied Research is located at The University of Southern Mississippi in Hattiesburg.

**MISSION**

The mission of the National Food Service Management Institute is to provide information and services that promote the continuous improvement of child nutrition programs.

**VISION**

The vision of the National Food Service Management Institute is to be the leader in providing education, research, and resources to promote excellence in child nutrition programs.

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**Objectives**

- Improve the quality of pasta, rice, and grains served to students.
- Improve the variety of pasta, rice, and grains served to students.
- Improve the appeal of pasta, rice, and grains served to students.
- Improve the healthfulness of pasta, rice, and grains served to students.

**Main Ideas in This Lesson**

- A healthy diet is built on foods from the breads and grains group and half your grains should be whole grains.
- Pasta, rice, and grains can be used as main dishes, side dishes, soups, or desserts.
- The shape of the pasta affects the cooking time.
- Different varieties of rice and grains need different cooking times.

**Preparation for Learning**

Review the list of recipes with each Culinary Technique. The recipes are available at:


**Practice or Application**

Prepare one or more of the recipes listed with one of the Culinary Techniques.
Al Dente (al-din-tay)
An Italian term that means *to the tooth*. It is used to describe pasta cooked to a firm texture.

**Culinary**
Relating to the kitchen or cooking. The culinary techniques discussed in this lesson include boiling pasta, cooking rice, and simmering grains.

**Culinary Technique**

**Just-In-Time Preparation**
This term is used throughout the lessons to mean preparing a menu item in small enough quantities so that it will be at its peak of quality when placed on the serving line. This preparation schedule avoids holding any food for a long time. Other terms that mean the same thing are *batch cooking* and *cooking to the line*.

**Mise en Place (meez-un-plahss)**
A French term used by chefs and other food professionals to describe all the different things that have to be done to get ready up to the point of cooking. Translated, it means *put in place*. It includes all the *get ready steps* in food preparation such as using the recipe to assemble the equipment needed and getting ingredients ready to combine.

**Nutrients**
The chemical substances found in food that nourish the body. There are six classes of nutrients: proteins, carbohydrates, fats, water, minerals, and vitamins.

**Simmer**
To cook a food in a liquid just below the boiling point.
Getting Ready

Common whole grains:

- Any grain with “whole” listed before the grain (whole-grain corn or whole cornmeal, whole bulgur, whole oat flour, whole rye flour, whole wheat flour, white whole wheat flour, whole durum flour, whole-grain barley, whole rye)
- Various grains with “groats” listed after the grain (oat groats, buckwheat groats)
- Various grains with “berries” listed after the grain (wheat berries, rye berries)
- Cracked wheat
- Crushed wheat
- Graham flour
- Oatmeal or rolled oats (regular, quick, or instant)
- Brown rice (regular or quick), brown rice flour, wild rice
- Popcorn (is not creditable in food-based menu planning.)

Some less commonly used whole grains:

- Whole amaranth
- Whole buckwheat
- Whole millet
- Whole quinoa
- Whole sorghum
- Whole spelt
- Whole teff
- Whole triticale
Most people eat many different kinds of breads, but may overlook the great variety of foods that include pasta, rice, and cereals. This lesson is about cooking pasta, rice, and other grain products.

These foods are grouped together for several reasons.

- They provide similar nutrients, including carbohydrates, B vitamins, and iron.
- They can be prepared using the same basic culinary techniques.
- They are used on menus in similar ways as ingredients in soups, main dishes, side dishes, salads, and even desserts.

Menu-Planning Practices for Healthy School Meals
- Increase the variety of cooked whole-grain cereals offered at breakfast.
- Plan a variety of whole-grain side dishes.
- Choose low-fat sauces to be served with pasta dishes.
- Serve a variety of vegetables with pasta dishes.
- Serve whole-grain pasta for increased fiber and other nutrients.

Purchasing Practices for Healthy School Meals
- Purchase brown rice instead of white rice.
- Purchase whole grains instead of refined grains.

Children should eat 4 to 7 ounce equivalents of grains each day with at least half of those grains whole grains.

According to MyPyramid:
- consuming foods rich in fiber, such as whole grains, as part of a healthy diet, may reduce constipation.
- eating at least 3 ounce equivalents a day of whole grains may help with weight management.

Whole grains consist of the entire cereal grain seed or kernel. The husk is the inedible outer covering. It is removed prior to processing the grain. The kernel has three parts—the bran, the germ, and the endosperm. Usually the kernel is cracked, crushed, flaked, or ground during the milling process. If the finished product retains the same relative proportions of bran, germ, and endosperm as the original grain kernel, it is considered a whole grain.

- The outer layer of the grain kernel is known as the bran. This outer layer is rich in fiber, B vitamins, and the majority of the grain’s minerals and other health-promoting substances called phytochemicals.
- The germ contains B vitamins, vitamin E, trace minerals, healthy fats, antioxidants, and phytochemicals.
- The large, starchy endosperm of the grain kernel contains complex carbohydrates, protein, and smaller amounts of B vitamins.

In contrast to whole grains, refined grains are milled to remove part or all of the bran and/or germ. This process removes 25–90% of the nutrients in the grain. Most (but not all) refined grains are enriched to add back some of the iron, thiamin, niacin, and riboflavin lost in the milling process. Enriched grains also have folic acid added to increase this important nutrient in our diets.
Pasta, rice, and grains are

- a good source of complex carbohydrates or starch.
- naturally low in fat; not high calories unless fat is added.
- naturally low in sodium.
- a source of important vitamins either naturally or from enrichment.
- a source of minerals, especially iron.
- delicious!

It could be said that this group of foods can “fill you up without filling you out!” Some people think that bread, cereals, rice, and pasta are “fattening.” This is not true. The reason that some people think of these foods as high in calories is they are often served with added spreads, sauces, or recipe ingredients that are high in fat. Culinary experts today have developed recipes that have great taste with moderate calories. These recipes begin with pasta, rice, and grain products cooked with the correct culinary technique.
Basic Principles of Preparing Pasta

Pasta is a general name for a simple dough mixture made from hard wheat flour and water. Hard wheat is high in protein and gluten strength. The dough is like a paste that is rolled thin and then shaped in many different ways. Pasta can be purchased fresh, frozen, or dry. Schools usually purchase dry pasta. Lasagna noodles are available frozen for use from the frozen state. Filled pastas, such as ravioli and tortellini, are often purchased frozen. To some extent, one pasta can be substituted for another. However, most recipes suggest one or more pasta shapes that are appropriate for the sauce or other ingredients in the recipe.

Pasta Shapes

There are hundreds of shapes and sizes of pasta with each shape used for different preparations based on how the sauce will cling, the texture desired, or how the product will be used. For example:

- Pasta shapes with holes or ridges, such as wagon wheels or rotini, are perfect for chunkier sauces.
- Thin, delicate pastas, such as angel hair or vermicelli, are better served with light, thin sauces.
- Thicker pasta shapes, such as fettuccine, work well with heavier sauces.
- Very small pasta shapes, such as alphabet shapes and acini di pepe, are good for soups.

Flavored pasta is available in a variety of shapes in both the dried and fresh forms. Vegetable ingredients are added to pasta to provide both color and flavor. An example of flavored pasta is spinach noodles that are green. Follow the package directions for cooking flavored pastas.

The flavored pastas are delicious and also make pasta dishes more attractive because of the color.

Cooking time depends on the shape of the pasta.

It is important to be familiar with different shapes of pasta so cooking times can be adjusted. The larger and fuller the pasta shape, the longer the cooking time. Most pasta recipes specify cooking times for pasta cooked al dente, tender but firm. Al dente is an Italian phrase that means “to the tooth.” Some of the pasta shapes and cooking times are shown in the Cooking Chart for Various Pasta Shapes. Just seeing this chart on cooking times helps to emphasize how important it is to follow the recipe and cook pasta the right way.

Pasta gets bigger and heavier when it is cooked.

Generally, pasta doubles or triples in weight when it is cooked. Likewise, the volume increases two to two and one-half times during cooking. So, if 1 gallon of dry pasta is measured, the cooked pasta would measure 2–3 gallons. Follow the recipe to cook the amount needed.

Follow the recipe to cook pasta.

The general rule for cooking pasta in boiling water is for 1 pound of pasta, use 1 gallon of water, 1 teaspoon of salt, and 1 teaspoon of oil. For 100 servings of spaghetti, 6 gallons of water, 2 tablespoons of salt, and 2 tablespoons of oil are needed to cook 6 pounds of dried spaghetti.
When pasta is to be used as an ingredient in a recipe that will be cooked more, like macaroni and cheese, it should be slightly undercooked. This would mean reducing the cooking time by about 2 minutes.

Pasta that is not cooked enough is tough and chewy. Pasta that is overcooked is soft and pasty. When overcooked pasta is combined with a sauce, it often breaks apart.

Handle pasta the right way after it is cooked. Like most foods, pasta is best when it is cooked and served right away. However, it is sometimes necessary to cook it ahead and hold it until time for service. Some suggestions for holding pasta are

1. When pasta is to be served immediately – drain, add the sauce, and serve.
2. When pasta is to be held a short time for service later – drain, toss with a small amount of oil to prevent sticking, cover, and hold in the warmer.
3. When pasta is to be served as part of a salad – cook the pasta a day ahead so it will be chilled when combined with all the other salad ingredients. Drain, cover with cold water just long enough to cool. The pasta does not need refrigeration for the short time it is cooling in the water. When pasta is cool, drain the water, and toss pasta lightly with oil to prevent sticking or drying out. Store covered in the refrigerator. Do not combine hot pasta with cold ingredients for a salad.
4. When pasta is cooked a day ahead for service in a heated dish, drain, and cover with cold water just long enough to cool. The pasta does not need refrigeration for the short time it is cooling in the water. When pasta is cool, drain the water, and toss lightly with oil to prevent sticking or drying out. Store covered in the refrigerator. When it is time to use the pasta, immerse it in boiling water until just heated through. Drain immediately and use according to the recipe. The pasta should not be cooked more, just heated to serving temperature.
5. When pasta is to be used in a cooked dish, slightly undercook the pasta.
## Cooking Chart for Various Pasta Shapes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pasta Name</th>
<th>Shape of Pasta</th>
<th>Approximate Cooking Time for al dente</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lasagna</td>
<td><img src="pasta-lasagna.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td>15 Minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bow ties</td>
<td><img src="pasta-bow-ties.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td>11 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wagon wheels</td>
<td><img src="pasta-wagon-wheels.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td>11 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linguine</td>
<td><img src="pasta-linguine.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td>10 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rigatoni</td>
<td><img src="pasta-rigatoni.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td>10 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spaghetti</td>
<td><img src="pasta-spaghetti.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td>10 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ziti</td>
<td><img src="pasta-ziti.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td>10 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fettuccine</td>
<td><img src="pasta-fettuccine.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td>8 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rotini</td>
<td><img src="pasta-rotini.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td>8 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elbow macaroni</td>
<td><img src="pasta-elbow-macaroni.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td>6 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noodles</td>
<td><img src="pasta-noodles.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td>6 minutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Basic Principles of Preparing Rice

Types of Rice
Schools may purchase different kinds of rice or receive different varieties as USDA-donated foods. The rice package will state the kind of rice. There are many varieties of rice that differ in the size and shape of the grain. When long grain rice is cooked, it is fluffy and the grains separate easily. Short grain rices are sticky and plump when cooked. Brown rice still has a bran layer and so it takes longer to cook. For more information about varieties of rice, review the Cooking Chart for Varieties of Rice.

Many different varieties of rice can be enriched. Enriched rice means that certain vitamins and iron have been added to the rice.

Follow the recipe for the correct amount of liquid for the kind of rice and culinary technique to be used. Follow the directions on the recipe or the package of rice. It is not necessary to rinse most rice as it is generally clean. The standard ratio for cooking rice is two parts water to one part rice. However, follow the recipe exactly.

Instead of seasoning rice and other grains with butter or margarine, consider these options:

- The flavor of rice can be enhanced by using chicken, beef, or vegetable stock as the cooking liquid.
- Added ingredients for good flavor include onions, vegetable and fruit juices, garlic, herbs, and spices.
- Select a recipe that includes new and different flavors.

Follow the recipe for the correct cooking time. Rice can be cooked in the steamer or in the oven if a steamer is not available. Cooking times vary with the culinary technique used. Follow the recipe for a quality product. Rice that is overcooked becomes mushy or sticky and the grains cling together. Overcooking means the starch takes in too much water and the grain begins to lose its shape.

After rice is cooked, it becomes highly perishable. It should be served immediately, kept heated, or be chilled in shallow pans and kept refrigerated until time for use.
## Cooking Chart for Varieties of Rice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variety</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Approximate Cooking Time (Actual cooking times vary with the culinary technique used.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Brown Rice</strong></td>
<td>Least processed form of rice; contains bran and inner germ layer; available as short, medium, long grain varieties, or parboiled; may be enriched</td>
<td>50-60 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>White Rice, long-grain</strong></td>
<td>Polished grains, usually enriched; cooks up firm and fluffy</td>
<td>25-30 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>White Rice, medium-grain</strong></td>
<td>Polished grains, usually enriched; cooks up tender and moist with grains tending to stick together</td>
<td>25-30 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>White Rice, Short-grain</strong></td>
<td>Polished grains, usually enriched; cooks up very tender and sticky; good for sushi and rice pudding; high starch content</td>
<td>25-30 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Converted Rice</strong></td>
<td>Parboiled to remove the surface starch, polished grains; may be enriched; cooks more slowly than regular milled white rice; holds well after cooking</td>
<td>30-40 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Italian Short-Grain Rice</strong></td>
<td>Short grains, polished; an example is Arborio which is very sticky, with a white color and mild flavor; used for risotto</td>
<td>15-20 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wild Rice</strong></td>
<td>Long, dark-brown seed that is prepared in the same way as rice; has a nuttier flavor and chewier texture than traditional rice; should be rinsed</td>
<td>35-60 minutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Basic Principles of Preparing Grains

There are many other kinds of grain dishes that can be included on school menus. Grain dish examples are bulgur or cracked wheat, buckwheat or kasha, and oatmeal. Of course, corn, cornmeal, and grits are also from the grain group. Grain dishes may be served at any meal and are often important ingredients in soups, main dishes, side dishes, and even desserts. When any grain is cooked, three things should happen:

1. The plant fiber becomes soft so it can be eaten.
2. The grain product keeps its shape and doesn’t become a paste.
3. The starch in the grain product is changed so it can be digested.

Follow the directions in the recipe to cook the grain product the right way.

Grain products (or cereals) can be cooked in a steam-jacketed kettle or a steamer. They can even be prepared in a heavy kettle on the range. Simmering is the most popular culinary technique for cooking grains. A grain product should not be stirred too much and should not be overcooked. Either action means that the product will be sticky and gummy. Recipes for grain products include the amount of liquid to be used and the cooking time. Following the recipe exactly means the product will be done and will meet quality standards.

In general, grain products are done when almost all the liquid has been absorbed. Some recipes suggest that the grain product be removed from the heat when almost all the liquid has been absorbed, and then left to stand covered for 5–10 minutes. Standing allows time for the remaining liquid to be absorbed.

Like rice, the liquid used to cook other grains can be chicken, beef, or vegetable stock flavored with herbs or spices or vegetables. Use a recipe and follow it exactly. The most common culinary technique used to cook grains is simmering.
### Various Grains

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grain</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Forms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Barley</td>
<td>Sweet, earthy flavor&lt;br&gt;Cheewy-to-soft texture&lt;br&gt;Used in soups, sides</td>
<td>Pot or scotch: unpolished kernels&lt;br&gt;Pearl: polished kernels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corn</td>
<td>Grain food that is eaten as both vegetable and grain</td>
<td>Hominy: hulled and degerminated kernels&lt;br&gt;Grits: ground hominy&lt;br&gt;Meal: medium-fine ground hulled kernels&lt;br&gt;Masa: processed with lime to remove hull&lt;br&gt;Masa harina: ground dried masa&lt;br&gt;Corndstarch: very finely ground hulled, degerminated kernels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Millet</td>
<td>Usually cooked like rice&lt;br&gt;May be added to bread for a crunchy texture</td>
<td>Whole: cooked like rice&lt;br&gt;Flour: used in flat breads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oats</td>
<td>Used as a hot cereal or in baked products</td>
<td>Rolled or old-fashioned oats: whole oat kernels with only husks removed&lt;br&gt;Quick-cooking oats: rolled oats cut into smaller pieces for quicker cooking&lt;br&gt;Instant oats: partially cooked and dried before rolling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quinoa</td>
<td>Seed of a plant but not botanically a grain</td>
<td>Whole seeds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rye</td>
<td>Used primarily as a flour for making bread</td>
<td>Rye berries&lt;br&gt;Cracked rye: Rye flour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheat</td>
<td>Widely used in many products</td>
<td>Whole: whole kernel without the bran removed&lt;br&gt;Cracked: whole kernel without the bran removed and coarsely crushed&lt;br&gt;Bulgur: whole wheat kernel that has bran removed&lt;br&gt;Semolina: polished wheat kernel with the bran and germ removed&lt;br&gt;Couscous: semolina pellets, often parcooked&lt;br&gt;Farina: polished, medium-grind wheat cereal&lt;br&gt;Bran: separated outer covering of wheat kernel; flakes&lt;br&gt;Germ: separated embryo of wheat kernels</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Culinary Technique: Boiling Pasta

1. **Measure the water in a steam-jacketed kettle.**
   Basic recipe for pasta is 1 pound pasta, 1 gallon water, 1 teaspoon salt, and 1 teaspoon oil. Increase all ingredients based on the number of pounds of pasta to be cooked.

2. **Bring water to a rolling boil and add pasta gradually. Stir to separate the pieces.**
   When cooking filled pastas like ravioli, add to boiling water and then gently simmer so filled pasta pieces are not broken.

3. **Return water to a boil and begin timing. Cook uncovered until the pasta is al dente.**
   Do not stir the pasta while it is cooking. Be careful not to overcook. If pasta is to be used in a recipe that will be cooked again, cooking can be reduced by about 2 minutes.

4. **When pasta is done, drain immediately in a colander.**
   Do not rinse pasta that is to be served hot.
   A small amount of oil can be tossed with the pasta to prevent sticking.

5. **Serve hot pasta immediately.** To cool pasta, cover with cold water until chilled. Drain, cover, and refrigerate until needed.

6. **Pre-cooked pasta can be reheated by quickly immersing in boiling water.** Do not allow to cook. Drain. Add sauce or seasonings and serve immediately.

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Try these USDA Recipes that include this Culinary Technique

- Chicken or Turkey Noodles .......... D-17
- Ground Beef and Macaroni .......... D-22
- Lasagna and Ground Beef .......... D-25
- Macaroni and Cheese .......... D-26
- Spaghetti and Meat Sauce .......... D-35
- Tuna and Noodles .......... D-37
- Chicken and Tomato Bake .......... D-41
- Chicken Tetrazzini .......... D-42
- New Macaroni and Cheese .......... D-51
- Macaroni Salad .......... E-7
- Pasta Salad .......... E-8
1. **Measure or weigh the amount of rice to be cooked.**
   Pour into 12 x 20 x 2-inch pans.
   Use no more than 3 pounds of rice per pan.

2. **Bring the liquid to a boil in a separate container.** If additional ingredients are to be used in the rice, add them to the liquid. Pour the boiling liquid over the rice.
   For added ingredients such as sautéed onions, garlic, celery, carrots, or mushroom, use a maximum of 3 cups of added ingredients for each 1 pound of rice. For each 1 pound of rice, use 1 quart of water or stock.

3. **Cover tightly with aluminum foil and either steam or bake in the oven.** Times will vary depending on the variety of rice used.
   The times shown below are for white rice, long grain (regular or parboiled), or medium grain.
   - **Compartment steamer** – steam at 5 lb pressure for 25 or 30 minutes
   - **Conventional oven** – bake at 350 °F for 25–30 minutes
   - **Convection oven** – bake at 350 °F for 20–25 minutes

4. **Remove from heat and let rice remain covered for 5–10 minutes.** Fluff rice with a fork before serving.

5. **To hold rice before serving, cover tightly with aluminum foil and hold above 140 °F in the warmer.**

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Try these USDA Recipes that include this Culinary Technique:

- **Cooking Rice** ............ B-3
- **Fried Rice** ............. B-10
- **Spanish Rice** ........ B-17
- **Orange Rice Pilaf** ...... B-21
- **Brown Rice Pilaf** ...... B-22
- **Rice-Vegetable Casserole** ............ B-23
- **Rice Pudding** ........ C-15
- **Orange Rice Pudding** .......... C-33
- **Ground Beef and Spanish Rice** ........ D-23
- **Broccoli, Cheese, and Rice Casserole** ........ I-8
This culinary technique can be used for most grains including breakfast cereals such as grits, cream of wheat, and oatmeal.

1. **Measure the water in a steam-jacketed kettle.**
   Follow the recipe for the amount of water and salt for each pound of grain.

2. **Bring water to a rolling boil and add grain gradually while stirring with a wire whip.**
   Add seasonings according to the recipe.
   Where cooking breakfast cereals such as grits or oatmeal, stir until some thickening begins.

3. **Return water to a simmer, cover, and cook until most of the liquid has been absorbed.**
   Do not continue to stir the grain during cooking since that will cause the grain to be sticky and gummy. The time needed for cooking will vary with the variety of grain, the amount being cooked, and the cooking temperature. Be careful not to overcook.

4. **When most of the liquid has been absorbed, remove from heat. Serve immediately.**
   Some grains will need to be drained. Others should be covered and allowed to absorb the remaining moisture.

5. **To hold cooked grains, cover with aluminum foil and hold in a warmer.**
Quality Standards

Before any food is placed on the serving line, it should be evaluated using the Quality Score Card. The quality standards described on the score card can only be reached when the recipe or package directions are followed. After a food is prepared, the school nutrition manager and assistant who prepared the food should make the determination whether the food product meets the standards on the Quality Score Card. If the decision is made that the food does not meet the quality standards, do the following things:

1. Substitute another similar food on the serving line. Follow the school district procedure for menu substitutions.
2. Use the pasta, rice, or grain in another way, if possible, in order to avoid wasting the food. Some examples of ways these foods can be used include soups, rice pudding, casseroles, and other mixed dishes.
3. Determine what happened during preparation that caused the poor quality and make plans to correct the preparation next time.
### Quality Score Card for Pasta, Rice, and Grains

**Date:** ______________  
**Name of Menu Item:** ____________________________________________________________  
**Proudly Prepared by** _____________________________________________________________  
**Quality Scored by** __________________________________________________________________

**Directions:** When the food is ready to serve, use this Quality Score Card to evaluate the quality. Mark **YES** when the food meets the standard and **NO** when it does not. Mark **NA** (Not Applicable) when a specific quality standard does not apply to the food being evaluated. Use the **COMMENTS** section to explain why a food does not meet a standard.

*Remember, if a food does not meet the quality standards, it should not be placed on the serving line.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Standard</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>NA</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Appearance</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pasta strands or pieces are distinct.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rice grains are intact (still whole).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grains/cereals have distinct particles,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>grains, or flakes.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product is moist but not watery.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No oil or fat is visible.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Texture or Consistency</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pasta pieces are tender (<em>al dente</em>) but</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>not gummy.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rice/grains are firm, but tender, fluffy.</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cereal is thick but not gummy.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product does not have lumps.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Flavor and Seasoning</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flavor is bland, but does not taste</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>starchy.</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flavor is typical of the grain.</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product is free from a scorched or</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>burned taste.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A mixed dish is well seasoned but not</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to excess.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Service Temperature</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hot pasta, rice, and grain dishes – 160</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>°F–180 °F</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cold pasta, rice, or grain salads – 34</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>°F–38 °F</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Culinary Practice is an activity designed to give foodservice assistants an opportunity to practice preparing pasta, rice, and grains. This practice should be completed within 10 days after the lesson. Use the Culinary Practice Score Card for the activity.

1. Foodservice assistants may work as partners or individually, depending on the directions from the manager. One partner should be someone who cooks and the other, someone who has other responsibilities. Both foodservice assistants should work together to complete the culinary practice.

2. The manager and foodservice assistants should discuss the Culinary Practice for Preparing Pasta, Rice, and Grains. Make a note of the date the culinary practice should be completed and discussed with the manager.

3. The manager will approve the recipe to be used for the practice. The recipe should include one of the culinary techniques described in this lesson. Review the steps of each culinary technique:
   - Culinary Technique: Boiling Pasta
   - Culinary Technique: Cooking Rice Using a Steamer or Oven
   - Culinary Technique: Simmering Grains

4. The manager and foodservice assistants who prepared the product will evaluate the product before it is placed on the serving line. Use the Quality Score Card for Pasta, Rice, and Grains.
Culinary Practice Score Card for Pasta, Rice, and Grains

Name(s): ____________________________

(This practice activity may be completed individually or with a partner. The manager will make this assignment at the end of the lesson.)

Purpose: The purpose of the activity is to practice Preparing Pasta, Rice, and Grains.

Culinary Technique: (Identify the culinary technique that you will use. Refer to the previous pages for a description of each technique.)

Name of the Recipe: ____________________________

Date for Production: ____________________________

Directions: The manager and foodservice assistant(s) will select a recipe for pasta, rice, or grains that includes one of the culinary techniques described in this lesson. Check YES or NO when each step is completed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plan food production for just-in-time service.</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Did you plan food production for just-in-time service?</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Review the Quality Score Card and the recipe.</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Did you review the recipe so you are familiar with the ingredients, equipment, and directions?</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you review the Quality Score Card so you will know how the finished product should look and taste?</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organize equipment and ingredients.</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Did you assemble all the equipment needed?</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you assemble all of the ingredients needed?</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Use the right culinary technique.</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Did you use the culinary technique correctly?</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deliver a quality product.</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Did you use the Quality Score Card to evaluate the product?</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you review the product with the manager?</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discuss the following questions with the manager before serving.</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How can the appearance of the food be improved?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How can the flavor or taste of the food be improved?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How can the texture and tenderness of the food be improved?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How can the service temperature of the food be improved?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The manager’s signature indicates this practice has been completed satisfactorily. The manager should keep this on file or submit it to the central office to document the completion of the lesson.

Name of Manager: __________________________________________  Date Signed: ________
References


USA Rice Federation. www.usarice.com/foodservice


