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FOOD EDITORS RELEASE

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***WILD RICE* – THE VERSATILE STAR OF YOUR THANKSGIVING MEAL**

No meal is more closely associated with a holiday than the one served at Thanksgiving. The mere mention of the holiday conjures visions of a golden brown turkey, flavorful stuffing, creamy mashed potatoes, and a luscious gravy.

But for those looking to add even more appeal to that mouth-watering image, consider incorporating the great taste of wild rice into your menu. A staple which can be used in a variety of ways, wild rice is the obvious choice to liven up your menu. Its distinctive nutty flavor and incredible versatility add great taste, ease, and elegance to your holiday meal.

Wild rice will make you shine when your guests dine on a couple of wild twists to your traditional meal. Try any or all of these great-tasting recipes:

Classic Creamy Wild Rice Soup

The ideal starter for your Thanksgiving spread is also one of America's favorite soups – *Classic Creamy Wild Rice Soup*. Hearty, simple, and extremely flavorful, this comforting soup blends the nutty flavor of wild rice with smoked ham, onion, sherry, and almonds to provide the perfect beginning to a memorable holiday meal. When you're looking for tasty options for leftovers, try swapping out the ham with leftover turkey.

Wild Rice Stuffing

Thanksgiving provides a great opportunity to incorporate the distinctive flavor of wild rice into your holiday meal with traditional *Wild Rice Stuffing*. This holiday favorite combines bacon, onion, sage, mushrooms, and wild rice in an extraordinary blend of flavors to create a delicious and flawless accompaniment to your holiday turkey.

Wild Craisin Salad

Rather than serving the same old jellied cranberry sauce, try this savory *Wild Craisin Salad* to add festive color and a new way to feature cranberries at your holiday celebration. *Wild Craisin Salad* combines wild rice, dried cranberries, green pepper, and celery tossed in a refreshing light cranberry vinaigrette dressing.

For even more great recipe ideas featuring the great taste of wild rice, search the world's largest wild rice recipe library for other ideas on how to make wild rice the star of your Thanksgiving meal (www.mnwildrice.org/search.php).

CLASSIC CREAMY WILD RICE SOUP

- ½ cup finely chopped onion
- 6 tbsp butter
- ½ cup flour
- 4 cups chicken broth
- 2 cups cooked wild rice
- ½ cup shredded carrots
- 1 cup cooked, cubed smoked ham
- 3 tbsp slivered almonds
- ½ tsp salt
- 1 cup half and half
- 2 tbsp dry sherry

In large saucepan, saute onion in butter. Add flour, stirring until bubbly; gradually stir in broth. Stir in wild rice, carrots, ham, almonds, and salt; simmer 5 minutes. Stir in half and half and sherry; heat through. 6 servings.

WILD RICE STUFFING

- 4 slices bacon, cut in 1" pieces
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- ½ lb mushrooms, sliced
- 3 ribs celery, chopped
- 3 cups cooked wild rice
- 1 tsp crushed leaf oregano
- ½ tsp crushed leaf sage
- 2 cups bread crumbs
- salt and pepper to taste
- ¼-½ cup chicken broth, optional

Preheat oven to 350°F. In large skillet, saute bacon, onion, mushrooms, and celery; cook until bacon is crisp. Stir in wild rice, oregano, sage, and bread crumbs; adjust seasonings. Place in greased 2-qt. casserole, cover and bake 30-40 minutes. Add ¼-½ cup chicken broth, if needed, for moisture.

Sausage Stuffing: Add ½ lb crumbled, cooked, and drained sausage. 6-8 servings.

WILD CRAISIN SALAD

- 4 cups cooked wild rice
- ½ cup sliced celery
- ¼ cup sliced green onion
- ¼ cup chopped fresh parsley
- ½ cup chopped green pepper
- ½ cup raisins (dried cranberries)

Dressing (whisk together; chill):

- ½ cup cranberry juice
- ½ cup white vinegar
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tsp basil leaves
- sugar and salt to taste

In large bowl, toss salad ingredients. Add dressing; toss. 6-8 servings.

Notes to Editor:

For an electronic copy of the photos call or email our office. If emailing, please specify your preferred photo format.

Due to limited funds, we are unable to utilize a clipping service. Run our release and send us a copy — we'll return the favor by sending you a ½ pound of wild rice. If you cannot accept the wild rice, we'd still appreciate a clipping to show our growers — **thanks!**

Classic Creamy Wild Rice Soup

Credit: Minnesota Cultivated Wild Rice Council



Wild Rice Stuffing

Credit: Minnesota Cultivated Wild Rice Council



Wild Craisin Salad

Credit: Minnesota Cultivated Wild Rice Council

