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FOOD EDITORS RELEASE

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***WILD RICE* – THE ALL-PURPOSE INGREDIENT FOR YOUR THANKSGIVING MEAL**

Thanksgiving meals tend to be predictable - a glistening, golden-brown turkey and typical sides of mashed potatoes, corn, or green beans. This is the menu we've all come to love, crave, and expect. However, many times, it's not just these typical staples that make the Thanksgiving meal so memorable, it's the accompaniments, the thoughtful and distinctive touches and trimmings that make each meal unique and special. One of the best ways to distinguish your holiday meal is by incorporating the great taste of wild rice.

Wild rice is an "all-purpose" ingredient, versatile enough to be used in virtually any type of recipe –appetizers, soups, salads, sides, or even desserts. Its great taste and distinctive flavor is a great way to add flair and elegance to any holiday feast. This year, try any one or all of these wild rice recipes to make your Thanksgiving meal one to remember:

Hot Cheesy Spinach Rice Spread

Looking for an hors d'oeuvre that will capture the attention of your guests? Try *Hot Cheesy Spinach Rice Spread* which features the smoky flavor of wild rice combined with cream cheese, spinach, and sharp white cheddar cheese. Serve with Melba toast or your favorite crackers and you've created the perfect appetizer to satisfy those pangs of hunger until dinner.

Classic Creamy Wild Rice Soup

The ideal starter for your Thanksgiving meal 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 a tasty option for leftovers, try swapping out the ham with leftover turkey.

Wild Craisin Salad

Rather than serving the same old jellied cranberry sauce, try savory *Wild Craisin Salad* to add festive color and a new way to incorporate cranberries into your holiday celebration. *Wild Craisin Salad* combines wild rice, dried cranberries, green pepper, and celery tossed in a refreshing light cranberry vinaigrette that serves as a perfect complement to the rest of your meal.

Wild Rice Stuffing

Incorporate the smoky, nutty flavor of wild rice into your holiday dinner with traditional *Wild Rice Stuffing*. Bacon, onion, sage, mushrooms, sausage, and wild rice join together to create an earthy blend of flavors and the perfect accompaniment to your holiday turkey.

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).

HOT CHEESY SPINACH RICE SPREAD

- 12 oz cream cheese, softened
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1/8 tsp ground nutmeg
- 1 box (9 oz) frozen Green Giant® Steamers Chopped Spinach, thawed and squeezed to remove moisture
- 1 1/2 cups cooked wild rice
- canola cooking spray
- 1/2 cup Sargento Artisan Blends Shredded Wisconsin Sharp White Cheddar Cheese
- hearty crackers or pita chips

In medium bowl, beat together cream cheese, garlic, and nutmeg until light and fluffy. Stir in spinach and wild rice. Lightly spray shallow microwave safe dish and spread rice mixture evenly; top with cheese. Microwave on medium-high 4 minutes until cheese is bubbly. Serve hot with Melba toast or hearty crackers. 6-8 servings.

CLASSIC CREAMY WILD RICE SOUP

- 1/2 cup finely chopped onion
- 6 tbsp butter
- 1/2 cup flour
- 4 cups chicken broth
- 2 cups cooked wild rice
- 1/2 cup shredded carrots
- 1 cup cooked, cubed smoked ham
- 3 tbsp slivered almonds
- 1/2 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 CRAISIN SALAD

- 4 cups cooked wild rice
- 1/2 cup sliced celery
- 1/4 cup sliced green onion
- 1/4 cup chopped fresh parsley
- 1/2 cup chopped green pepper
- 1/2 cup raisins (dried cranberries)

Dressing (whisk together; chill):

- 1/2 cup cranberry juice
- 1/2 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.

WILD RICE STUFFING

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

Preheat oven to 350°F. In large skillet, sauté 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 1/4-1/2 cup chicken broth, if needed, for moisture.

Sausage Stuffing: Add 1/2 lb crumbled, cooked, and drained sausage. 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!**

Hot Cheesy Spinach Rice Spread

Credit: Minnesota Cultivated Wild Rice Council



Classic Creamy Wild Rice Soup

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Wild Craisin Salad

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Wild Rice Stuffing

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