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FOOD EDITORS RELEASE  
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## **WILD ABOUT FLAVOR: RICE & SHINE THIS HOLIDAY SEASON**

*Give Your Thanksgiving Feast the Wild Rice Touch*

As the holiday season approaches, families across the nation are carefully preparing for their Thanksgiving feasts. This year, upgrade your holiday spread with a delightful twist by incorporating the great taste of wild rice – a nutritious and flavorful alternative to traditional Thanksgiving sides your guests are sure to “gobble up.” With its nutty flavor and chewy texture, wild rice enhances the culinary experience and adds a touch of sophistication to your holiday spread.

Known as an ‘ancient grain’ and the only cereal grain native to North America, there may be no holiday more appropriate to feature the tradition of wild rice. It has long been considered a highly nutritious whole grain, rich in protein and essential nutrients, and a great source of dietary fiber. It possesses a flavor profile tailor-made for adding a distinctly nutty flair to your holiday stuffing, sides, soups, and salads. It also pairs beautifully with seasonal ingredients, making it an ideal complement to roasted turkey, savory stuffing, and vibrant vegetables – all of which are sure to impress your guests. Its adaptability means it can complement both traditional and modern recipes, fitting seamlessly into any Thanksgiving feast.

This season, let wild rice steal the spotlight at your holiday table. Your guests will love its flavor, texture, and nutritional punch, leaving them asking for seconds – and maybe even thirds! From intimate dinners to big family gatherings, wild rice is the perfect way to honor tradition while adding a fresh twist. Try these wild rice recipes to make your Thanksgiving spread one to remember:

### ***Sicilian Shepherd's Pie Skillet***

A great pairing for your Thanksgiving feast is this comforting *Sicilian Shepherd's Pie Skillet*. This easy recipe uses five simple ingredients to add a warm fall touch. The blend of butternut squash, wild rice, Italian sausage, and feta creates rich, layered flavors that bring something new, making it a memorable holiday addition.

### ***Wild Rice Cheddar Bacon Hush Puppies***

Wild rice, crispy bacon, sharp cheddar, and a touch of honey butter come together for a hush puppy that balances sweet and savory. Served with warm homemade honey butter, these *Wild Rice Cheddar Bacon Hush Puppies* make a standout side for any holiday meal.

### ***Wild Rice Stuffing***

Thanksgiving provides a fantastic 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.

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 feast ([www.mnwildrice.org/search.php](http://www.mnwildrice.org/search.php)).

#### **SICILIAN SHEPHERD'S PIE SKILLET**

- 1 lb ground pork Italian sausage
- 1 cup prepared tomato pasta sauce
- 2 cups cooked, cubed, butternut squash
- 1 cup cooked wild rice
- 1/3 cup crumbled feta cheese

In large skillet, sauté sausage until cooked through. Add in next three ingredients; heat through. Top with feta cheese. 4 servings.

#### **WILD RICE CHEDDAR BACON HUSH PUPPIES**

- 1 cup each: fine cornmeal and all-purpose flour
- 1 tbsp baking powder
- 2 tbsp sugar
- 1 tsp garlic powder
- 2 tsp salt
- 1 cup buttermilk
- 2 cups cooked wild rice
- 2 large eggs
- 1/2 cup cooked and crumbled bacon
- 1 cup shredded cheddar cheese
- 1/4 cup finely chopped green onion
- 4 cups canola oil

Honey Butter (stir together; set aside):

- 3/4 cup salted butter, room temperature
- 1/4 cup honey

In large bowl, combine dry ingredients; stir in remaining ingredients (except oil). In large skillet, heat oil to 350°F. Drop batter in oil, 2 tbsp at a time. Turn frequently until golden brown. Remove; place on paper towel. Serve with honey butter. 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 electronic copies of the photos for these recipes, 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!***

**Sicilian Shepherd's Pie Skillet**



**Wild Rice Cheddar Bacon  
Hush Puppies**



**Wild Rice Stuffing**

