



4630 Churchill Street, #1, St. Paul, MN 55126 • Phone: 651.638.1955 • Fax: 651.638.0756 • wr@mnwildrice.org • www.mnwildrice.org

FOOD EDITORS RELEASE

October 2018

Contact: Beth C. W. Nelson, President

Clean Sweep in “Get Wild with Wild Rice” Recipe Contest

For first time ever, Minnesotans Take Home Both Grand Prize and People’s Choice Awards

Minnesota’s passion for wild rice was evident in the results of the Minnesota Cultivated Wild Rice Council’s 2018 “*Get Wild with Wild Rice Recipe Contest*” as home-state chefs made a clean sweep of both the Grand Prize and People’s Choice awards. Natalie Yarbrough of Minnetonka took home the Grand Prize with her Asian-inspired *Chicken Thai Wild Rice with Peanut Sauce*, while Sharon Holland of St. Louis Park won the coveted People’s Choice Award with her *Chicken Gone Wild*.

The “*Get Wild with Wild Rice Recipe Contest*” is more popular than ever, attracting more recipes this year than ever before, and from every corner of the country – from California to Connecticut and from Alaska to Florida. Traditional, creative, and often unusual wild rice recipes were submitted in the categories of appetizers, soups, salads, entrées, sides, and desserts, demonstrating the great taste and versatility of wild rice.

Recipes went head-to-head in a taste test conducted by culinary specialists who narrowed the field to 11 finalists competing for two awards. The Grand Prize was awarded by a panel of judges headed by Chef Ken Goff, and the People’s Choice Award was given to the finalist garnering the most online votes during September’s National Rice Month.

For the Grand Prize winning recipe, Goff, a well-known Twin Cities executive chef who for decades received acclaim for his regional cuisine and later taught aspiring chefs at Le Cordon Bleu, led a panel of judges in selecting Yarbrough’s *Chicken Thai Wild Rice with Peanut Sauce*. Goff noted the dish was “*packed with delicious flavors and dynamic textures.*”

Grand Prize Winner – [Chicken Thai Wild Rice w/ Peanut Sauce](#) (Natalie Yarbrough, Minnetonka, MN)

Natalie Yarbrough, a physical therapist as well as a marathon runner, started working on her Grand Prize-winning recipe a month before the contest opened. “I think ethnic cooking is big right now,” Yarbrough said. “Thai cuisine and Indian cuisine are becoming more popular. People are becoming more experimental in choosing foods and getting out of the normal hamburger-and-hotdog-type of diet. So I decided it probably would be best to try something new.” Her recipe as written is not spicy, she points out, but is versatile enough that spices can easily be added. “It can be customized,” Yarbrough says.

A health-conscious philosophy is apparent in Yarbrough’s cooking: “It’s quite a healthy dish. It has healthy monounsaturated fat from the peanut butter, whole grains from the wild rice, and a lot of veggies,” she said. Wild rice is a whole grain and actually not a rice. Its carbohydrates contain not only energy for marathon runners like Yarbrough, but also fiber.

Since she was a young girl, the 31-year-old has loved rice – white, brown and, after her father exposed her to creamy wild rice soup, she became hooked on wild rice. But it wasn’t until she discovered the Minnesota Cultivated Wild Rice Council’s contest that Yarbrough realized she could use the grain in more than stuffing or soups.

(The Council’s website is home to the world’s largest online wild rice recipe library. To view the recipes of any of the 2018 finalists, visit www.mnwildrice.org/search.php - “Contest Finalist” category.)

People's Choice Winner – [Chicken Gone Wild](#) (Sharon Holland, St. Louis Park, MN)

This is actually Sharon Holland's second People's Choice Award as she also won in 2015 with her [Wild Bacon-Bleu Stuffed Fillet Mignon](#) recipe, and went on to earn a top ten finish in the World Food Championships later that year. This year Holland came up with *Chicken Gone Wild*, an original dish featuring chicken breasts stuffed with wild rice, vegetables, and chopped bacon. "It's a great recipe because you can double it using eight chicken breasts to fill a 9 x 13" pan," said Holland. "It takes two and a half hours to bake so you can clean your house, set the table or make your side dishes, and you've got a whole meal without those last-minute preparations."

The Council's latest recipe brochure, *Minnesota Cultivated Wild Rice Recipes and Answers to Often Asked Questions*, features contest winning recipes and other wild rice favorites, including soups, appetizers, salads, entrées, and side dishes. To receive your free copy, send a self-addressed-stamped-envelope to: Minnesota Cultivated Wild Rice Council, Newest Recipes, 4630 Churchill St #1, St. Paul, MN 55126.

CHICKEN THAI WILD RICE WITH PEANUT SAUCE

Natalie Yarbrough, Minnetonka, MN

- 1 pkg (16 oz) Just BARE® Boneless Skinless Chicken Breast Fillets, cut into bite-sized pieces
- 1 cup each: frozen Green Giant® Veggie Spirals™ Carrot and frozen Green Giant® Veggie Spirals™ Zucchini
- 1 red bell pepper, sliced
- 2 tbsp canola oil
- 4 cups cooked wild rice
- ¼ cup thinly sliced green onion

Peanut Sauce (whisk together; set aside):

- ⅓ cup crunchy peanut butter
- 4 tbsp brown sugar
- ⅓ cup soy sauce
- 2 tbsp each: lime juice and sesame oil
- 1 tsp minced garlic

In large skillet, sauté chicken, carrots, zucchini, and red pepper in oil until chicken is cooked through. Add wild rice and peanut sauce; heat through. Top with green onion. 4 servings.

CHICKEN GONE WILD

Sharon Holland, St. Louis Park, MN

- ½ cup finely chopped onion
- ¼ cup finely sliced celery
- ¼ cup finely chopped fresh mushrooms
- 1 tbsp canola oil
- 1 cup cooked wild rice
- 3 strips bacon, cooked and chopped
- 4 Just BARE® Boneless Skinless Chicken Breast Fillets, thinly pounded
- 4 strips bacon
- canola oil cooking spray
- 8 shaved deli corned beef slices, cut into bite-sized pieces
- 1 cup Crystal Farms® Shredded Monterey Jack Cheese
- 1 cup sour cream
- 1 can (10.5 oz) cream of chicken soup
- ⅔ cup chicken broth
- 1 can (4 oz) Green Giant® Mushrooms Pieces & Stems with juice

Preheat oven to 325°F. In medium skillet, sauté onion, celery, and fresh mushrooms in oil until soft. Stir in wild rice and chopped bacon; set aside. Spoon ⅓ cup of wild rice mixture on each chicken breast. Roll up, spiral with 1 strip of bacon, and secure with toothpicks; set aside. Prepare 9x13" pan with canola spray and layer corned beef, cheese, and chicken. In medium bowl, combine sour cream, soup, broth, and canned mushrooms; pour over chicken. Bake covered, 2½ hours. Periodically spoon sauce over chicken. Remove cover for last ½ hour of baking. 4 servings.

Note to Editor:

For a high-resolution electronic copy of the photos, call or email our office.

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 1/2 pound of cultivated wild rice. If you cannot accept the wild rice, we’d still appreciate a clipping to show our growers — **thanks!**

Readers responding to the brochure offer receive a “Mail Order Supplier” list along with the 2018-2019 *Minnesota Cultivated Wild Rice Recipes and Answers to Often Asked Questions* brochure. Due to limited funding, readers need to send a business size self-addressed-stamped-envelope to:

Minnesota Cultivated Wild Rice Council

Newest Recipes
4630 Churchill St., #1
St. Paul, MN 55126

Chicken Thai Wild Rice with Peanut Sauce

Credit: Minnesota Cultivated Wild Rice Council



Chicken Gone Wild

Credit: Minnesota Cultivated Wild Rice Council

