

# RIDE OR DIE CREAMY COCONUT RICE

## And a variation: Burnt Honey-Habanero Creamy Coconut Rice

Makes 2 ½ cups

Note that this is a very creamy coconut rice! You can adjust to your liking. Easily make the rice more or less creamy by adjusting the quantity of coconut milk. That's the nice thing about adding the coconut milk at the end: the experience can be quite DIY.

This recipe can be easily multiplied. Just be attentive to the act of stirring the coconut milk into the rice. The technique is all about folding the milk into the pot as gently as possible, which can be more cumbersome with larger quantities of rice.

Use a short to medium grain rice, if you can. While basmati and other long grain varieties will work, the thinner grains of rice don't plump and absorb in the same way. It's worth seeking out sushi rice, or my favorite these days, Calrose rice. The Botan brand is very reliable.

### For Ride or Die Creamy Coconut Rice:

**1 cup short to medium grain rice, like Calrose or sushi**

**1 cup plus 2 tablespoons water**

**Kosher salt**

**¾ cup full-fat coconut milk, from a well-stirred or shaken can, plus additional as needed**

### For Burnt Honey-Habanero Creamy Coconut Rice:

**1 cup short to medium grain rice, like Calrose or sushi**

**1 cup plus 2 tablespoons water**

**Kosher salt**

**¾ cup full-fat coconut milk, from a well-stirred or shaken can, plus additional as needed**

**3 tablespoons honey**

**1 habanero chile, split lengthwise**

**3 tablespoons unseasoned rice wine vinegar**

**Flaky salt, for finishing**

### Ride or Die Creamy Coconut Rice

1. Place rice in a bowl and cover with water. Swish the rice with your hands and tip the bowl to pour off the water. Repeat 3 to 4 times more, until the water is clear. Drain rice in a colander, shaking to remove as much water as possible, and transfer to a medium pot with a tight-fitting lid. Add the water and ½ teaspoon salt and give everything a stir.
2. Place the pot over high heat and bring to a boil. Gently stir again and cover. Reduce heat to low and let steam, until tender, 12-16 minutes. There should be little whispers coming from the sides of the pot, but no rattling of the lid.
3. Remove the lid, and taste a few grains from a couple of different spots in the pot. They should be tender but with a slight bite. Make sure they're cooked through, though! You're going for the rice equivalent of an al

dente pasta. If the rice needs to steam a bit longer, cover the pot, keeping it on the heat, and continue to taste at 3 minute intervals.

4. Remove the pot from the heat and fluff rice with a fork, scraping along the bottom of the pot. Let the steam blow off for 3-5 minutes. Pour  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup of the coconut milk in three additions, using the fork to gently fold and scrape the bottom of the pot. Assess the creaminess, knowing that the coconut milk will absorb as more sits, and add additional coconut milk as desired, a tablespoon at a time, until desired consistency is reached. Season to taste with salt and serve immediately.

## **Burnt Honey-Habanero Creamy Coconut Rice**

1. Place rice in a bowl and cover with water. Swish the rice with your hands and tip the bowl to pour off the water. Repeat 3 to 4 times more, until the water is clear. Drain rice in a colander, shaking to remove as much water as possible, and transfer to a medium pot with a tight-fitting lid. Add the water and  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon salt and give everything a stir.

2. Place the pot over high heat and bring to a boil. Gently stir again and cover. Reduce heat to low and let steam, until tender, 12-16 minutes. There should be little whispers coming from the sides of the pot, but no rattling of the lid.

3. Remove the lid, and taste a few grains from a couple of different spots in the pot. They should be tender but with a slight bite. Make sure they're cooked through, though! You're going for the rice equivalent of an al dente pasta. If the rice needs to steam a bit longer, cover the pot, keeping it on the heat, and continue to taste at 3 minute intervals.

4. As the rice steams, make the burnt honey, habanero, and coconut mixture: Pour coconut milk into a medium bowl. Have your vinegar ready! (You'll use the vinegar to stop the cooking of the honey.)

5. Place honey in a small skillet over medium heat. (Nonstick works great here.) Add the habanero halves, cut side down, and begin to stir with a fork. (If you prefer a less spicy rice, only use half, but 1 habanero is less daunting than it seems!) Let cook, stirring continuously, until habaneros are softened. (You can smash them a bit with the fork to hasten infusion). Continue cooking, using the habaneros and the fork to help stir, until honey is bubbling vigorously and has turned a shade or two darker, about 3-5 minutes, increasing heat as necessary if the honey isn't caramelizing. You'll be able to smell a difference in the honey, too; expect toasty, burnt sugar aromas. When you see the first whisper of smoke come off the honey, immediately add the vinegar. (The mixture will bubble vigorously.) Let cook, stirring, 1 minute, to allow the vinegar to cook off a bit.

6. Scrape the honey mixture into the bowl with the coconut milk. (Note: Do not add the coconut milk to the honey itself. Coconut milk can break— that is, separate— very easily when it hits a hot skillet!)

7. When the rice is finished and the steam has blown off for 3-5 minutes, add the coconut milk mixture in three additions, using a fork to gently fold and scrape the bottom of the pot. Let sit for 5 minutes to absorb. Assess the creaminess and add additional coconut milk as desired, a tablespoon at a time, until desired consistency is reached. Serve immediately, topped with flaky salt.

# **NOODLE**