

# Turn plain rice to perfection: Dried Fruit and Nut Rice Pilaf



Dried Fruit and Nut Rice Pilaf

Photo Susie Iventosch

## By Susie Iventosch

Multigrain rice medleys are really nice, if cooked well. The problem for me is that they often end up mushy, with some of the grains perfectly cooked, while others in

the mixture are either over- or undercooked. This is why I choose basmati rice almost exclusively these days, except when I'm making wild rice, which is my very favorite. Basmati rice cooks perfectly every single time I make it,

and I really like that. But, it's also a plain rice, so it needs some sprucing up from time to time to accompany certain dishes. A couple of weeks ago, I had a

hankering for Chicken Marbella from the Silver Palate Cookbook and made this rice pilaf to accompany it. The sautéed fruits and nuts beautifully complement the olives

and prunes in the chicken dish. I won't equivocate ... this rice is amazing!

### INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup basmati rice
- 1 ¾ cup chicken broth
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 shallots, thinly sliced
- ¼ cup slivered almonds
- ¼ cup pecan pieces
- ¼ cup raisins
- ¼ cup dried cranberries
- ¼ cup pepitas

### DIRECTIONS

Bring broth to a boil and immediately add rice. Bring back to a boil, cover and reduce heat to low. Simmer until rice is cooked and fluffy. While rice is cooking, heat oil in a sauté pan over medium heat and add shallots. Cook until translucent and just beginning to turn golden-brown. Add raisins, cranberries, pecans, almonds and pepitas to the shallots in the pan. Continue to cook over medium-low heat until nuts and fruits begin brown just slightly, approximately 10 to 15 minutes. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Turn nut-fruit mixture into rice and toss to blend. Serve immediately or store in an airtight container to later reheat and serve.



Susie can be reached at [suziventosch@gmail.com](mailto:suziventosch@gmail.com). This recipe can be found on our website: [www.lamorindaweekly.com](http://www.lamorindaweekly.com). If you would like to share your favorite recipe with Susie please contact her by email or call our office at (925) 377-0977.

## ◆ Not to be missed ◆ Not to be missed ◆ Not to be missed ◆

### KIDS, PARENTS & TEENS

**The 2019 Bookmark Contest** sponsored by the Friends of the Lafayette Library and Learning Center will be open to all Lafayette students grades K-8 to enter their original artwork. The entry forms will be available beginning Feb. 15 at the Lafayette Library main desk, the Friends Corner Book Shop and at school libraries in the Lafayette School District and St. Perpetua School. The entry deadline is Friday, March 8. For more information please contact Kay Pekrul: [kae865@hotmail.com](mailto:kae865@hotmail.com).

**Mindful Littles Kindness Book Club** from 10:30 a.m. to noon Saturday, March 9 at the Orinda Library Garden Room. Read a book on a special kindness theme, practice heart-centered movements and mindfulness, and do a fun creative art project. Water and snacks for your kids. Please wear comfortable clothes. Ages 4-11. Parents/guardians are required with children. Register at: <https://mindfullittles.org/>

**Spectacular Special Needs Party** from 2 to 4 p.m. on Saturday, March 16 at the Lamorinda All-Access Playground at Moraga Commons. Party entertainment, snacks and birthday cake await you! No RSVP needed. Just show up! These parties are free and made possible by SEED's generous donors. <https://seedlafayette.org>

**Lamorinda Teens Read** - the school libraries of Acalanes, Campolindo, Los Lomas, and Miramonte present "One Community, One Book" from Feb. 25 through March 29 when all four schools will read Nic Stone's latest novel, "Dear Martin" and multiple events will happen at the Contra Costa Library branches. Pick up a free copy of the book to keep in the school or local library.

### OTHER

**In partnership with the California Public Utilities Commission**, MCE will hold an upcoming workshop from 6 to 8 p.m. Thursday, March 7 at 2300 Clayton Rd Suite 1150, Concord to learn about General Order 156. Commonly referred to as "Utility Supplier Diversity," this CPUC program encourages California investor-owned utilities to provide a fair proportion of total utility contracts and subcontracts to businesses that meet diversity qualifications. This program is open to women, minority, disabled veteran, and LGBT-owned firms representing at least 51 percent of the business ownership. MCE is hosting an informative workshop with guest speakers from the CPUC and the Supplier Diversity Clearinghouse. Together, we will speak to the purpose of this program, certification qualifications, and the

contracting opportunities available through the Clearinghouse. Refreshments will be served and parking will be validated. Seating is limited, so please RSVP by Feb. 28 at [certifyamplify.eventbrite.com](http://certifyamplify.eventbrite.com).

**Saint Mary's College Guild** cordially invites everyone to join them in their Festive St. Patrick's Day fundraiser evening of dinner, music, show, with silent auction from 5 to 9 p.m. Saturday, March 16 at the Saint Mary's College Soda Center. The Frank O'Connor Band will feature a variety of Irish and American music. We will be entertained by the Rohan Murphy Irish Dance Academy. Join us for a traditional Corned beef and cabbage dinner - wine included at dinner - \$50 per person. All proceeds benefit SMC Scholarships. Make checks payable to: SMC Guild - Send to: Cynthia Kelly - 628 Augusta Drive - Moraga, CA 94556; (925) 388-0437.

**Lafayette resident, Papa John Kiefer**, will, again, offer workshops on "How to Raise Your Own Chickens." Topics will include raising young chicks, laying hen maintenance, and sustainable coop construction. Workshops are free and will be held in Lafayette from 1 to 3:30 p.m. on Sunday, March 17. Reservations are required. Contact: [chickenspapajohn@gmail.com](mailto:chickenspapajohn@gmail.com). Location provided upon registration.

**Say Something Workshop:** How to Help a Friend or Family Member Living with Domestic Violence at 10:30 a.m. on Saturday, March 23 at St. Mark's United Methodist Church, 451 Moraga Way, Orinda. Every year more than 10 million women and men are physically abused by an intimate partner in the United States. Come learn how to listen, talk and take action when someone you care about is being abused. Facilitated by Rev. Michele Robbins, an ordained pastor with a background in Family Relations. Her workshops focus on understanding the cycle of violence, types of power, abuser tactics, and how to talk with victims, including avoiding pitfalls and words that help. More info: [shalompastor3@gmail.com](mailto:shalompastor3@gmail.com).

**Come see fancy Ferraris**, Fiats and more! Saint Mary's College Department of World Languages and Cultures and the Dante Club invite the community to its Italian Cars and Culture event from 4 to 7 p.m. on Sunday, March 31. Enjoy Italian Sports Cars and live folkloric Italian music by the band Pizzi Cali on the front campus lawn at SMC. Delicious food and ice cream will be available for purchase. Free. Email [amr18@stmarys-ca.edu](mailto:amr18@stmarys-ca.edu) with any questions.

### POLITICAL GATHERINGS

**The Lamorinda Democratic Club** will be hosting Assembly Member Rebecca Bauer-Kahan for a legislative update from 7 to 9 p.m. on March 14 at the Lafayette Library and Learning Center. She will join a panel discussion focused on air quality: Coming Up for Air. Additional presenters include James Leach from Sustainable Lafayette and a representative from the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD). Free for members; \$5 for guests. Visit [LDclub.org](http://LDclub.org) for more information or email [info@ldclub.org](mailto:info@ldclub.org).

### SENIORS

**Cooking: Eggs, Eggs and More** Eggs by Byron Park Dining Services Team from 2 to 4 p.m. Thursday, March 14 at Byron Park, 1700 Tice Valley Blvd., Walnut Creek. In this demonstration-style class, you will be guided in the many ways the humble yet versatile egg can be prepared - from basic to complex, scrambled to soufflé! You will enjoy samples of the dishes and be given the recipes so you may recreate them at home. Space is limited; these classes fill up quickly. Please arrive early to allow time for parking. Cost: \$10. RSVP to Lafayette Senior Services by Monday, March 11: [Seniors@LoveLafayette.org](mailto:Seniors@LoveLafayette.org) or 284-5050.

### GARDEN

**Walnut Creek Garden Club's** March meeting will begin at 10:30 a.m. on Monday, March 11 at Heather Farm, 1540 Marchbanks Road in Walnut Creek. The featured speaker, Liz Emmonds, will demonstrate how easy it is to manipulate plant materials to create interesting forms to take flower arrangements to a new and exciting level. Please email [mslittle44@gmail.com](mailto:mslittle44@gmail.com) with any questions.

**Lafayette Garden Club** will meet at 10 a.m. on March 14 at the Lafayette Veteran's Building, 3780 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette. The meeting is open to all at no charge. The program for this meeting will be "Edible Gardening and Design" presented by author and Lafayette resident Stefani Bitner. She will offer up ideas and suggestions for our home gardens. Complimentary refreshments. The LGC has openings for new members so come by and enjoy!

**The Montelindo Garden Club** March meeting will begin at 9:30 a.m. on Friday, March 15 at the Lafayette Library and Learning Center's Community Hall. Presentation: Chelsea Flower Show, Speaker: Barbara Norkus, who is an anglophile who has attended the world fa-

mous Chelsea Flower Show many times. She will share her music video from the 2016 show.

**The Moraga Garden Club** will hold its next meeting at 9:30 a.m., March 21, at the Holy Trinity Church, 1700 School Street, Moraga. The guest speaker will be Pamela Hester, from the Sloat Garden Center in Danville. The topic of her discussion will be, "Growing Vegetables in Containers." Free. Refreshments will be served. For more information, visit [moragagardenclub.com](http://moragagardenclub.com).

**The Orinda Garden Club** presents Fire Resistant Landscaping by garden designer Kate Frey at 10 a.m. on Thursday, March 28 at the Orinda Library Auditorium. It's a given that homeowners want their landscapes to be aesthetically pleasing. Ecological considerations such as drought tolerance and habitat support are increasingly valued and showcased. Frey will discuss plant materials and techniques for creating a beautiful fire resistant landscape. Free.

**Please submit:**  
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## Service Clubs Announcements

**Lafayette Rotary Club**

**Step in on a Thursday and join us for our lunch meeting.**  
 Thursday at noon Oakwood Athletic Club, 4000 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette.

<p><b>March 7:</b>  <b>Annabelle Hall. Propel A</b>  <b>Cure. Support/Cure for</b>  <b>Crohn's Disease</b></p>	<p><b>March 14:</b>  <b>Chuck Kohler</b>  <b>Survivor of Pearl Harbor</b></p>
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[www.rotarylafayette.org](http://www.rotarylafayette.org)  
[www.facebook.com/Rotary-Club-of-Lafayette-CA](https://www.facebook.com/Rotary-Club-of-Lafayette-CA)

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