

## Suggestions for Classroom Use at the Elementary Level

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Teacher asks students to share what they usually eat for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Also, have sections for morning and afternoon tea; morning recess and after school are regular eating times for children. Display each under the headings BREAKFAST, PLAY LUNCH, LUNCH, AFTERNOON TEA and DINNER (SUPPER if relevant) on separate pieces of large paper. Children will list down foods that are common to your country and the country of their origin. If there are Asian students in the class, they may eat rice often at meal times. With the younger students you could provide them with a worksheet divided into these sections for each meal time and have them draw the foods they usually eat. Then have the children cut them out and paste on the large pieces of paper.

Talk about the different foods Japanese children eat at these times. Highlight how many of these dishes are made from rice. Show pictures of these foods and discuss how they taste, some of these rice dishes are sweet!! Even biscuit snacks can be made out of rice! Foods would include; *onigiri*, *obentoo*, *tamago gohan*, *sembei*, *mochi* etc. Have the students repeat the name of each dish when picture or item is displayed. Discuss with the students how many of these dishes are made from rice. Make children aware of how diverse these meals are in preparation, taste, purpose etc. For example, *tamago gohan*; “How would you feel having that for breakfast? What do you think it would taste like?...” For example, curry



Onigiri



Obentoo



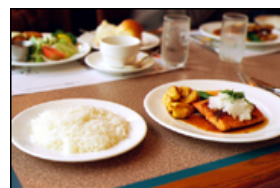
Sembei



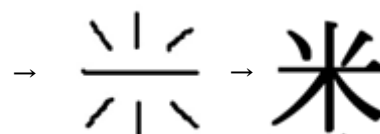
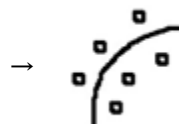
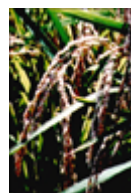
Mochi

rice and chicken rice are easy to prepare meals that can be bought in sachets.

How many rice dishes do we eat? Do many of these come from other countries originally? List the different rice dishes and make a display of pictures or drawings. Talk about the word for rice; 米 (*kome*; rice grains), ごはん (*gohan*; boiled rice), and ライス (*raisu*). Show students these words written in Japanese and have them repeat the word. Show students the word for rice in kanji. Talk about the origin of the kanji from its original picture.



Bring along a ear/blade of rice and have the children talk about what it looks, feels and smells like. Make a visual comparison between the ear and the original kanji picture for rice. Have the children draw the kanji progression of the drawing for rice to its present kanji. Present all words in *hiragana* but explain that *raisu* is written in *katakana* and revise why this is so. Revise the use of kanji in Japan also. Make the Kanji symbol for rice the center of your growing display. This will look effective and also encourage visual recognition of meaning, knowing the *on* or *kun* readings are not necessary.



Before you make any of the rice recipes, make some rice with a rice cooker. Highlight the importance of a rice cooker in Japanese homes.



Talk about the texture and taste and how it differs from rice made like we make it. Highlight the use of short grain rice (*japonica*) and how it differs from long grain (*indica*). Discuss why the Japanese use this type of rice. (Because it is sticky when cooked and can be molded easier into the different Japanese rice dishes.) Ways of cooking and serving rice clearly vary for each variety of rice. What variety of rice do you use/do we eat? Have raw samples of the types of rice and allow children to feel, smell, play with the grains.

### Science

Talk about;

Where did rice come from?

Where is it grown?

Why is it so widely eaten in Japan?

Why is it so easily grown in Japan?

What are the ideal features for growing rice? (climate etc.)

Japan's hot summers and heavy rainfall provide an ideal climate for growing rice. In Japan there are many mountains and not much grazing land. Rice can be grown on the many paddies in Japan and also in other Asian countries. Talk about how rice is a staple food around the world, specifically in countries such as; China, Indonesia, Mexico, Spain, etc. List these on a poster. Children discuss why it may be in these countries that it is a staple food. (Because it is easy to grow in this country? Or is it cheap to buy? Do the people like the taste? etc.)

### Social studies

Children discuss the different types of dishes in these countries and record these on the poster. Dishes such as; *chaofan*, *nasi-goreng*, *kukpap*, chili con carne, paella, etc. Have pictures of these foods or ask the older children to collect these pictures at the library. Add these pictures to the display. Ideally, if there are some parents from these countries who can bring along some of these foods to taste or cook with the students, this would be far better.



Share some rice crackers with the students and talk about the diversity of foods made from rice. Make students aware that you can even drink rice wine. Have a sample bottle or picture to show the students.

### Cooking (sample recipe attached on page 4-5)

Prepare some Japanese dishes made out of rice. Some dishes that are easy to make at school are;

-*tamago gohan*

-*onigiri*

-*sushi*

-*gohan*

-*mochi*

-*furikake*

Give the students the recipes to take home to share with their parents. Have the older children write down the recipe. Have the recipe in Japanese writing with pictures, like you would see on the back of a packet in Japan. Children can translate the recipe from the picture clues and Japanese writing.

### History

Discuss with students the importance of rice in Japan and talk about the history of rice. Rice farming was introduced to Japan 4,000 years ago. People began to live in these rice farming communities, villages began to develop and a society grew from rice farming. Many years ago, rice was as precious as money; people were paid in rice, taxes were paid in rice, the wealth of a lord could be measured by the amount of rice his farm produced.

### Festivals

Most of the festivals celebrated in Japan today grew out of rice farming when people gathered in the field to pray for a good harvest of rice. Remind children of *Oshoogatsu* and share what happens at this time. This New Year festival was once a ritual to honor the rice god.

### Studies of society and the environment

#### (Social studies)

Rice is grown in all the prefectures of Japan. Japan produces over eleven million tons each year. Find out how much rice your country produces each year. Talk about the exporting (selling) and importing (buying) of rice in your country. Does Japan sell its rice to other countries? Why not do you think? Do we sell our rice? To whom? Why did Japan buy more rice from us last year? What

would happen (if there was a worse rice shortage) to Japan's economy, people, life styles, etc. Make a list of the things we buy (import) from Japan and sell (export) to Japan. Find pictures of these things in magazines or by contacting local agencies.

### Health

In Japan people eat at least one bowl of rice each day. Babies' first solid food is usually rice. When people are sick, they eat rice porridge (*okayu*). It is now widely accepted that rice is nutritionally good for you and a great asset to a healthy diet. Discuss to what food group rice belongs. List down other foods which we eat from this group. List down the other food groups. Have children draw, paste or list the food they eat from each group. Take a typical Japanese diet and divide it up into the different food groups. Talk about how the children in Japan still have healthy diets but they are different from our own but still meet the different food groups.

Make sentences using the grammar; \_\_\_\_\_ *o tabemasu* (～をたべます). Revise or introduce some words like everyday, tomorrow, on Saturday, etc. For the older children, revise or introduce past tense sentences, \_\_\_\_\_ *o tabemashita* (～をたべました).

Talk about how rice is synonymous with Japan, have children discuss what things we identify in our country. For example, Australia has *Akubra* hats, koala, kangaroos, etc. For Japanese people, images of rice fields and rice dishes remind them of home, family, their childhood.

Use rice grains to make the *hiragana* or *katakana* alphabet. Draw the shape on the cardboard and glue the inside of each character. Pour rice onto the glue. When dry, display the syllabary. Spray paint to use actively in learning activities.

### Mathematics

Use rice grains in experimental mathematics activities; Units of Volume, Mass, etc.

### Art

Use rice grains in art activities, paste on paper with pasta and spray paint to make a three dimensional mural. Paste rice on egg shells and spray paint to make a decoupage egg to use as a decoration for Christmas.

### Music

In Music, put rice into containers to make musical instruments (shakers).



# How to Make Really Good Rice

This recipe shows you how to make really delicious rice and also how to use cooked rice, along with other ingredients, to make a dish called *いためごはん* (*itame-gohan*; Japanese-style fried rice). *いためごはん* is easy to prepare—simple enough for a child to make.

## Step 1: Measuring the rice

The first thing to know is that in Japan, the standard unit used for measuring out rice prior to cooking it is the *go*; one *go* is equivalent to 180 cc, or slightly less than four-tenths of a pint. The electric rice cookers found in practically every kitchen in Japan come equipped with measuring cups that hold exactly one *go* of rice. To make sure you have just the right amount in the cup, fill it up with uncooked rice and then run a flat-edged utensil, such as a butter knife, across the top. Using this method, measure out three cups (you're going to cook three *go* of rice).



## Step 2: Washing the rice

Pour the rice you've measured out into a large bowl and add enough water to cover the surface of the rice. Then wash the rice by mixing it around in the bowl while rubbing gently with your fingertips. After a few minutes of this, pour off the water (which will now be cloudy), add fresh water,



and resume washing. Repeat this process five or six times until the water in the bowl no longer turns white and cloudy after washing. After pouring off the water for the last time, leave the washed rice to stand for 30 minutes to an hour before cooking it.

## Step 3: Measuring the water

Pour the washed rice into the bottom of the pot that fits inside the rice cooker and place the pot on a level surface. The proper amount of water required to cook three *go* of rice is indicated on the inner surface of one side of the pot—pour in water until it reaches the line marked “3.”

Now you can place the pot inside the rice cooker, close the lid, and turn it on. It will turn itself off automatically when the rice is cooked.

## Step 4: Letting the rice steam

After the cooking cycle has ended, let the rice stand for 10 minutes inside the rice cooker (don't lift the lid yet). This allows the rice to settle in its own steam. Then lift the lid on the rice cooker and take a look. If you can see little air holes dotting the surface of the cooked rice, congratulations! It's just right.



# A Simple Recipe Using Cooked Rice: *Itame-gohan* (Japanese-style fried rice)

## Ingredients (to make four servings)

3 *go* rice (prepared as described above)  
100g sausage  
1 cup frozen mixed vegetables  
3 eggs  
10g butter  
1/2 cup ketchup  
cooking oil  
salt and pepper

## Cooking in Three Steps

1. Heat a small amount of cooking oil (enough to cover the bottom of the pan) in a large skillet. Remove the eggs from their shells and pour them all together into the skillet. Scramble the eggs in the skillet, gently moving the uncooked portions toward the bottom until thoroughly cooked.
2. Remove the cooked eggs to a plate. Put the frozen vegetables into the skillet and heat them thoroughly. Add the butter, the sausage (sliced), and the cooked rice, mixing the contents of the skillet, and then mix in the ketchup.
3. Return the scrambled eggs to the skillet and mix all the contents together thoroughly. Season with salt and pepper, transfer to a shallow serving bowl, and serve.