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## Cook potatoes in rice cooker

There are several things to keep in mind to make sure everything goes as planned when you're using a rice cooker. But before we go into that, let's look at the different varieties of rice you might be cooking, specifically the differences between brown and white rice.While several common types of rice are simply different varieties of plant species in the *Oryza* genus, white rice typically differs from brown rice only in how much it has been polished. When rice is harvested, its natural husk, called its chaff, is usually polished off to create brown rice products. From there, more polishing in varying amounts can remove the bran layer, changing it from brown to white rice in stages. In addition to the bran layer, rice has a small portion called the germ attached to it, and this can be polished off as well. Once rice has been through this entire process, it is considered typical white rice.When using most rice cookers, you should wash the rice prior to cooking. Unless you're cooking the aptly-named rinse-free variety, washing the rice is an important step to clean off any remaining particles from the production process, which in some countries can include talc. Rinsing the rice is also a good way to clean off any excess starch, which will make the rice less sticky. The one exception to this rule is large, fully-automated rice cookers that rinse the rice for you.Another important tip is to keep the measuring cup that typically comes with a rice cooker. Measuring-cup volumes vary from country to country, and to make sure you're filling your rice cooker with the right amount of rice and water, you'll need that little cup. This is also important because most rice cookers have an optimum load capacity. For example, a rice cooker with a capacity of seven cups may work best when preparing four to six cups of rice. But try to cram in eight cups or go light and make one, and you probably won't enjoy the finished product.It's also good to note that different varieties of rice require different amounts of water to cook properly. Many rice cookers feature measuring lines etched in the inner cooking pan, which are usually appropriate for short grain white rice and some types of brown rice. For other types of rice, follow instructions about how much water to add. The freshness of rice may also affect the amount of water and cooking times -- typically more water is needed for older rice.Now that you know the path to rice-cooker success, you need to choose the best one for your needs. The next section will help you select your perfect rice cooker.More Than Just a Side DishRice provides a lot more than nourishment. Rice and its by-products can also be found in a variety of household products, such as rope, paper, cosmetics and toothpaste [source: U.N. Food and Agriculture Association]. Growing up, our family's rice cooker was a staple, like the refrigerator or the kitchen sink. It never occurred to me to not have one. As an adult, I noticed friends cooked rice in a pot on the stovetop. There's nothing wrong with that, but let's see which approach gets you the easiest and consistently best rice.The ContendersOkay, so cooking rice isn't exactly difficult. As far as kitchen skills go, it's one of the easiest foods to make, right up there with toast and cereal. However, there are two basic ways to make rice happen, with strong opinions on both sides:Rice Cookers: Rice cooker users say they do the job perfectly every time and they're a must. Cookers range quite a bit in price and utility. Some go for as little as \$15, and others with tons of features and options for over \$200. Expensive rice cookers, like the Zojirushi, use "fuzzy logic" technology, which senses the type of rice you're cooking and adjusts itself to make better sushi, porridge, brown rice, and more. I don't make a lot of sushi or porridge, so I use this standard Aroma rice cooker, a top rated version that's still very affordable at under \$30. I fill the pot with rice and water, press a button, and walk away.Stovetop Method: The stovetop method is pretty standard. Proponents argue, "what's so hard about cooking rice on the stove?" You put some water in a pot, allow it to boil, then turn the heat down (or off, depending on who you ask) and cover for about 10-15 minutes. "You don't need a stinkin' cooker," they say. It's true, this method doesn't require a whole lot of work, but you do have to keep an eye on it to make sure you don't overcook it and burn the rice on the bottom.To put these two methods to the test, we made a standard bowl of rice. This is the rice cooker's most basic function, after all, so we wanted to see how it compared to the stovetop method in efficiency, effort, and taste.I grew up with a standard, cheap rice cooker my mom bought at a grocery store. Shopping for my own...Read moreA Rice Cooker Clearly Takes Less EffortReaders have expressed some strong opinions about rice cookers in the past. "Why bother with a rice cooker," you've asked, "when you can just cook rice on a stovetop?" Good question. Why bother with a toaster when you can just toast bread in the oven? Why use a juicer when you can squeeze fruit with your bare hands? Because it's easier. And, perhaps more importantly, it's foolproof.It literally took me less than a minute of work to make the pot of rice you see in the photo above. I rinsed the rice straight in the pot that comes with the cooker, added some water using the first knuckle method (you can also use the measuring scoops that come with it), then pressed "Cook." Twenty minutes later, I had perfectly cooked rice.Rice needs the right water-to-grain ratio to come out perfectly fluffy and delicious. You can use...Read moreThe main draw of a rice cooker is the fact that it cooks perfect rice every single time. We're all capable of screwing up even simple tasks every now and then, and rice is no exception. Maybe Jeopardy is on and you're killing it in the 90's sitcom category so you get distracted and, before you know it, your rice overboiled and now it's soggy. And your stove is a mess. This isn't a big deal; you can always start over, but with a rice cooker, you never have to worry about it. You put some water in a pot and you get perfectly cooked, fluffy rice every single time, even when you're distracted. It stops cooking when it's time to stop cooking.At least in my experience, a rice cooker is easier to clean, too. Most of them come with built in lids so all you have to do is clean out the non-stick pot. You should wipe down the lid, but that's relatively easy to do.Time and Taste Are a Toss UpA lot of people argue that a rice cooker actually makes rice taste better. I'm not sure that's entirely true. I always thought rice cooker rice tastes better, too, but it's probably only because I've never nailed the stovetop method.This time, I actually followed a recipe instead of winging it, and my rice was the perfect consistency, just like the rice cooker rice. It was fluffy, slightly sticky, and just moist enough. Maybe it's just my unrefined palate, but both bowls tasted the same.It took me 5-10 minutes to prepare the stovetop rice and, from start to finish, the whole process took about 20 minutes. I spent the same amount of time waiting for rice with the stovetop method.So while the rice cooker makes things easier, time is a toss up. You still have to wait for the rice to cook, after all. And the difference in taste is negligible, too. As long as you cook a decent pot of rice on the stove, you probably won't notice it tastes any better or worse than the rice you cook with your rice cooker. At least I didn't.A Rice Cooker Does More Than Cook RiceIf you didn't grow up with a rice cooker in your household, it might seem weird to have a machine dedicated to one specific job. Last time I moved, I actually ditched my cheap \$15 rice cooker because I wanted to downsize. I figured, why keep another thing lying around when I can use something I already have, a pot, to get the job done? When I ditched it, though, I actually cooked rice a lot less often. Even though it's not that much work on the stove, it was still more work than a rice cooker, so I'd use my cooking effort to make something else.When I got the Aroma as a wedding gift, I was glad to have a rice cooker back in my life. It makes cooking rice so easy, you actually want to cook rice more. I went back to making brown rice and avocado for lunch, white rice and fish for dinner, rice to add to soups, and so on. It is kind of weird to have a machine that only does one specific job, but depending on what you eat, it's a big job. Rice is a great, versatile staple and the rice cooker is a versatile tool. You can use it for other things, too, like steaming vegetables. Or baking a cake!For the past few years, the Instant Pot has been the sweetheart of the one-pot cooking world. But...Read moreOf course, you can use a regular pot for lots of other foods, too. The point is, if you have a rice cooker, you don't just have to use it for cooking rice. It's by no means a unitasker.The Verdict: If You Cook Rice Often Enough, Just Buy a CookerIf you cook rice often enough, say at least once a week, \$15-\$30 is not a lot to spend on a machine that helps you cook a meal staple with almost zero effort. Zojirushi owners swear by their cookers, but I've never used one. They're supposed to do what traditional rice cookers do, only even better, and with different kinds of rice and grains. If I ate anything more than regular jasmine rice, I'd probably give it a try, but for standard needs, even a \$15 cooker is worth it. The Aroma is a good, cheap compromise, though.On the other hand, if you don't make rice often or you just don't like having too much stuff, skip the cooker. Who needs more junk lying around the house? I've actually thought about ditching my toaster for the same reason—I rarely use it and it's easy enough to toast bread on the stove or in the oven. However, as someone who loves rice and eats it frequently, I've put the debate to rest, for myself, at least: the rice cooker wins.Photo by Alex Shultz. I grew up with a standard, cheap rice cooker my mom bought at a grocery store. Shopping for my own cooker as an adult, I was surprised at how many options there are to choose from and how expensive those options can be. Cooking rice is a pretty straightforward task, so what's with the super expensive cookers? Here's what I found.Why You Even Need a Rice CookerBefore asking why you'd want an expensive rice cooker, one might ask why you want a rice cooker, period.Growing up, we never cooked rice on the stove, and embarrassingly, I didn't even know how to do it until recently. Cooking rice on the stove isn't exactly difficult, but I have screwed it up a few times. I've burnt it. I've made it too mushy. A rice cooker, on the other hand, cooks perfect rice every time. All you do is add rice, measure water, and press start.A basic rice cooker has a built-in thermostat that tracks the temperature of the pot. The water starts to boil and steam, and once the thermostat hits a certain temperature, the heat is reduced and the device shuts itself off (or switches to "Warm" mode).The fact that I didn't know how to cook rice on a stove for years is a testament to how effective a rice cooker actually is (as well as how lazy of a cook I am). If you make a lot of rice and want to save some time and effort, that's a good enough reason to get one, and even a cheapie will do the job. You can also make all sorts of other fun foods in a rice cooker, so it's hardly a unitasker.For the past few years, the Instant Pot has been the sweetheart of the one-pot cooking world. But...Read moreThe Difference Between a \$20 and \$200 MachineTwo words separate the \$20 rice cookers from the \$200 ones: fuzzy logic.Fuzzy logic rice cookers have fancy automatic technology that cooks your rice with a little more nuance. The fuzzy logic theory was introduced by UC Berkeley professor Lotfi Zadeh in 1965. The New York Times explains how it works in terms of technology: "Fuzzy logic" is a way of describing situations that cannot be described in absolutes: yes or no, true or false, white rice or brown. Fuzzy logic is used in automated technology that must sense and adjust for various factors, like mixing cement (depends on humidity) and changing traffic lights (depends on traffic). In rice cookers, fuzzy logic can take into account the type of grain, its age and hardness and its desired consistency. Frequent rice cooks who work with a variety of grains and have room on the countertop will not be disappointed by the performance of these machines.In other words, these \$200 machines are equipped with the technology to cook rice that's optimized for sushi, porridge, and more. It can also adjust the cooking for different kinds of rice. The device's microchip adjusts the cooking times and temperatures accordingly.For example, here's the product description for a popular brand, the Zojirushi:This 5-1/2-cup rice cooker and warmer makes 10 cups of cooked rice and includes a variety of cooking functions comprising of white (regular/sushi, softer or harder), mixed rice, porridge, sweet, semi-brown, brown, rinse-free, and quick cooking. This unit uses a black thick spherical pan with stay cool side handles that provides even heating for better cooking. There is a programmable melody or beep audio indicator to indicate when the cooking cycle has ended.It's sort of like a cheap electric hand mixer versus a fancy stand mixer. They both mix stuff, but the stand mixer will do a hell of a lot more. Of course, there are varying levels of quality of stand mixers, just like there are rice cookers.Our own editor-in-chief, Alan Henry, owns one of these and stands by it.The promises are real. Put medium grain jasmine or basmati rice in it versus short grain sushi rice and it cooks both perfectly without me really having to do anything different aside from measuring the water.In fact, the machine also makes up for any human error:Maybe I short the water or add more water, thinking I can alter the consistency on my own. Nope, the machine is smarter than I am, and adjusts temperature accordingly and produces consistent rice. Okay, but maybe I want to make congee or rice porridge or something. Well, there's a button on the front for that.If you make different kinds of rice, grain, or oats frequently, a quality, more expensive model will make your job a lot easier.Picking the Right Cooker for the JobWhichever route you go, you have to pick the right size machine for the job. Here's a basic size guideline:Small: 3 - 4 cupsMedium: 5 - 6 cupsLarge: 8 - 10 cupsJumbo: 14+ cupsIf you're a small household—it's just you and maybe a significant other—you'll probably just want a small. If you have a family or you make big batches at once, you may want a medium. Of course, it depends on your own individual needs, but these sizes are a basic guideline. Beyond size, there are a few basic features even a cheap model should have:A "Keep Warm" buttonA removable, non-stick containerOne-touch operationMost will also come with a steamer so you can steam vegetables, too, as well as a serving paddle and a cookbook. Fancy, fuzzy logic rice cookers should come equipped with an audible timer, different settings for rice and grains, and, of course, they should be easy to use: just a hit a button and you're done. Most of them also come with an extended "keep warm" feature that keeps the rice heated for over twelve hours.Some fuzzy logic rice cookers will come with even more features, making them even more expensive: a reheating cycle, a higher cup capacity, brown rice settings and so on. Just like anything else, those features are only worth it if you're going to use them, and they can turn an already expensive \$200 model into a more-expensive \$300 one.There are also brands to consider. The Zojirushi seems to be to rice cookers what the KitchenAid is to stand mixers: it's the most sought-after brand because it does the job well, but there are cheaper alternatives. Rosewill and Panasonic also make fuzzy logic rice cookers, and while their ratings aren't as high as the Zojirushi, they're cheaper.There are in-between options, too. For example, Cooks Illustrated put an array of different models and brands to the test and the Aroma was their top pick. It doesn't come with quite as many features as the Zojirushi, but it has options for brown rice, white rice, and steam.And here's one thing to keep in mind with Japanese rice cookers: a traditional Japanese-style measuring cup is equal to 3/4 of a U.S. cup. So make sure to adjust accordingly, or better yet, for traditional rice, use the first knuckle method.

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