



Insight

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Tel: +966-1-460-6906/460-8689 / 460-8232/460-8235 Fax: +966-1-460-0846

RICE – The Wonder Grain



Today, you often hear those health conscious people boasting, "We eat brown rice and not white polished rice." In the fifties, in Sri Lanka, the preferred rice eaten by the elite class was white rice, and the brown or the red rice was meant to be for servants, poor folk, and the rural populations who had their own rice fields. There was a status symbol given to white boiled rice on the dining table. Now, strangely enough there is a growing trend for the consumption of brown rice.

Brown rice is an unpolished rice, the brownish layer on the surface is left clinging to the seed (rice) is called bran. There is the fully unpolished rice when the bran layer is not removed; the color of the rice is very brown. Sometimes this rice is nicknamed, "village rice" as it is mostly consumed by the rural folk. Then there is the partially unpolished rice - only part of the bran is removed, the color of this particular rice is light brown.

The process that produces brown rice as mentioned above removes only the outermost layer, the hull, of the rice kernel and is the least damaging to its nutritional value. The complete milling and polishing that converts brown rice into white rice destroys-

- 67% of the vitamin B3
- 80% of the vitamin B1
- 90% of the vitamin B6
- half of the manganese
- half of the phosphorus
- 60% of the iron

ctd on page 2

Embassy Opens Information Center



Sri Lankan Ambassador AAM Marleen declaring open the new Information Center at the Sri Lankan Embassy, Hamid Ansari Ambassador of Nepal and Maldivian Ambassador Hussein Shihab, Deputy Chief of Lankan mission Sabarullah Khan, Fathima Marleen, wife of the Ambassador and SLES President SAM Rasdeen, are also seen in the picture.

With the introduction of new facilities and services to Saudi nationals, Sri Lankans, and Expatriates in the Kingdom, visit visas to the island will be processed within 10 minutes. Announcing the mission's improved services at the inauguration of an Information Center at the Embassy, the Island's Ambassador AAM Marleen said that the new services and the newly opened Information Center would give ample information about the island's natural resources, tourism, products and services to foreigners who would like to harness the potentials of the country.

He added that Sri Lankan products are beautifully displayed in showcases and an Information Officer will be available to advise local businessmen on the opportunities available in the country.

"Sri Lanka is a country blessed with natural resources to attract Middle Eastern tourists for a family holiday. It is a land not well-known in this part of the world. We would like to project the island as a tourist destination to Arabs and expatriates living here," he said. Around 2,000 Saudi nationals had visited Sri Lanka during the 2008 holiday season. "We hope to enhance this figure through organized programs.

Hamid Ansari, Ambassador of Nepal and Maldivian Ambassador Hussein Shihab were also present at the function.

Enumerating the features added to the existing Mission's headquarters in Riyadh, the envoy said: "We have done a beautiful landscape outside the Embassy premises to display a salubrious atmosphere for the visitors. They include a waterfall, swimming pool and a spacious waiting hall. "Those in the waiting area could avail themselves of tea, coffee and beverages to refresh themselves during the official hours," he said. He also said that the Labor Division has been given a spacious area to accommodate the large number of Lankans who come for labor welfare work. He said that these services include renewal of workers registration with the Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment (SLBFE) and workers welfare activities.

ctd on p4



Business Opportunities

Virgin Coconut Oil, Coconut Flour

Mr. Mervin Stephen Gonawala,
Marketing Manager
Smith Foods (Pvt) Ltd
Nugegoda, Sri Lanka
Tel: +94 11 4319991
Fax: +94 11 2827367
Email: marketing@smithnaturals.com
Web: <http://www.smithnaturals.com>

Facial Wash, Face lifting Cream, Fairness Cream

Mr. Indika Pieris, Export Manager
Nature's Beauty Creations Limited
Millewa, Horana, Sri Lanka
Tel: +94 34 2261100
Fax: +94 34 2261101
Email: info@naturessecrets.lk
Web: <http://www.naturessecrets.lk>

Synthetic Wood (for Ceiling, Paneling, partitioning, Moulding)

He was Graphics (Pte) Ltd
Colombo 10, Sri Lanka
Tel: +94 11 2685174
Fax: +94 11 2687133
Email: uniliversep@lanka.com.lk
Web: <http://www.hewasgroup.com>

Embassy Info Center p1

The envoy also thanked the businessmen and organizations who helped to provide these services. Zafir Ziard, CEO of Unique Choice International, Riyaz Yusuf from Serendib Toastmasters, SAM Rasdeen, President of the Sri Lankan Expatriates' Society (SLES) and Hada Water, received special mementos from the Ambassador for contributing to the success of the new project.

Acknowledging the award, Ziard said that Sri Lanka is the only country in the world that has the best features for tourism. "Saudis have shown interest in visiting the island during the recent months." Thanking the embassy for its unstinted cooperation given to the SLES, Rasdeen said, the society which has been in existence for the past 19 years, has rendered useful services to its community members in a wide range of fields that include recreation, workers welfare and health, religious and cultural celebrations.

ORIENTAL CUISINE



Mutiara Restaurant, offering Malaysian, Thai, Filipino & Sri Lankan Cuisine was launched on 21st of January 2009 with the participation of His Excellency AAM Marleen, Sri Lankan Ambassador and His Excellency Assoc. Professor Syed Omar Al Saggaf, Malaysian Ambassador to the Kingdom.

WARUNI RECEIVES TOSHIBA LAPTOP



Waruni Kanchana of Habaraduwa Galle, whose family were victims of the 2004 Tsunami was gifted with a Laptop by members of the Australia-Sri Lanka Medical Aid Team (AuSLMAT) as a part of their ongoing education program.

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insightnewsletter@gmail.com

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+966-1-453-8811 (Tel), 470-1167 (Fax)
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PAGE 4

Most of selenium and magnesium Dietary fiber and essential fatty acids are also destroyed.

When cooking, brown rice should first be soaked in water for about 30 minutes before cooking. This process is necessary to soften the bran layer on the rice seed.

The ratio of rice to water is 1:2 (1 cup of rice to 2 cups of water). Brown rice when cooked is firmer than the polished white rice.

Nutritive values per 100 gm. of cooked brown rice:-

- * Vitamin B: Thiamine 32mg;
- * Niacin: 4.6mg.
- * Vitamin B6 (pyridoxine),
- * Vitamin K. Selenium, magnesium, tryptophan
- * Calcium: 39mg; Iron: 2mg;
- * Phosphorus: 303mg.
- * Potassium: 150mg
- * Fat: 1.7mg
- * Carbohydrates: 77.7.gm
- * Protein: 7-5gm
- * Calories: 360

The difference between the nutritional components of brown rice and white rice are many. If you have been consuming white rice you could imagine the amounts of nutrients you have not gained by eating white rice regularly.

Rice is one of the most important energy producing foods in the world, supplying as much as half of the daily calories for half of the world's population. In Sri Lanka today, rice packets for sale in wayside restaurants, mainly purchased by the working class, would be the only food that supplies them with the necessary calories for a hard day's work.

There are over 8,000 varieties of rice, although we are only familiar with just a handful.

Often, rice is categorized by its size as being short grain, medium grain or long grain. Short grain, which has the highest starch content, makes the stickiest rice (Samba), while long grain (Doongara and Basmati), is lighter and tends to remain separate when cooked.

Another way that rice is classified is according to the degree of milling that it undergoes. Brown rice is referred to as whole rice, is the whole grain with only its inedible outer hull removed. White rice is both milled and polished, which removes the bran and germ along with all the nutrients that reside within these important layers.



Sri Lanka, known to the Colonial rulers as Ceylon in ancient times, has a mix of many communities and peoples who have lived with each other throughout the island since ancient times.

According to statistics estimated by the UN, the population of Sri Lanka in 2003 was estimated at 19,065,000, which placed it as number 53 in population among the 193 nations of the world. In that year approximately 6% of the population was over 65 years of age, with another 27% of the population under 15 years of age. There were 107 males for every 100 females in the country in 2003. The annual population growth rate for 2000–2005 is 0.81%, with the projected population for the year 2015 at 20,640,000. The population density in 2002 was 289 per sq km (748 per sq mi). About 50% of the population is concentrated in the southwestern quarter of the island.

It was estimated by the Population Reference Bureau that 24% of the population lived in urban areas in 2001. Colombo, the commercial capital and chief city, had a population of 690,000 in that year. Other urban centers are Dehiwala-Mt. Lavinia, 96,000; Moratuwa, 70,000; Jaffna, 129,000; Kotic, 109,000; and Kandy, 104,000. According to the United Nations, the urban population growth rate for 2000–2005 was 2.8%.

Average life expectancy is established at 67.5 years (males 66 years, females 69 years). The population consists of multi ethnic groups: Sinhalese 74%; Tamil 18%; Muslims 7%; others 1%.

The largest ethnic group in the island, are, the Sinhalese, who are divided into low-country Sinhalese (subjected in coastal areas to greater colonial acculturation) and Kandyan Sinhalese (more traditional upland dwellers, named after the Central Province Kingdom of Kandy).

The Tamil community, are divided into Sri Lankan Tamils (who have been resident in the island since early historic times) and Indian Tamils (who were brought in as plantation labor in the nineteenth century).

The Muslims are believed to have descended from Arabian merchants who espoused local women, and also from migrants from from South India and Indonesia and settled in the island since ancient times. They are classified into several subsets, based on their origins, and classified as Moor's, Malay's, Memon's, Khoja's and Borah's.

The advent of the Colombo Chetty community from Nagapatnam, in India is well documented from 1663 during the reign of King Rajasingha 11 of Kandy, and the governorship of the Dutch Ryckloff Van Goens. With the arrival of the westerners in search of the riches of the east, the Chetties of India used the opportunity to further their trade.

The Burgher community in Sri Lanka, many of whom have migrated to Europe and Australia since independence, claim their ancestry to the Portuguese, Dutch and British Colonial rulers, who intermarried with the locals.

The Parsee Community, who are Zoroastrians by religion, initially migrated from Persia to India and thereafter a small group moved to Sri Lanka.



Ambassador AAM Marleen is flanked by Saifuddin Thassim, left, and M.S.M.Husseini, Principal of Bangladesh International School, Niron Fernando, second left, and SLES President S.A.M. Rasdeen, third left

"Sri Lankans in Saudi Arabia have set an example to be emulated for their communal unity and amity", observed Ambassador Abdul Ajeed Mohammed Marleen, while speaking at the annual Haj celebrations held at the Embassy premises recently.

The function was attended by members of the Muslim, Sinhalese and Tamil communities, sponsored by the Sri Lankan Expatriates' Society (SLES) in Riyadh. The Ambassador, his wife Fathima Marleen, Deputy Chief of Mission Sabarullah Khan and Sri Lankans from all walks of life participated in the afternoon gathering which started with a sumptuous lunch spiced with a variety of Sri Lankan Muslim delicacies.

Speaking further, the envoy said that it is heartening to note that Sri Lankan communities in the Kingdom work together in all cultural events organized by the SLES. He pointed out that the SLES, which function under the aegis of the Mission, is mainly instrumental in contributing to unity among all communities. "It is the only popular organization among the three communities in the Kingdom," he said, pointing out that organizing events such as Vesak, Deepavalli and Haj in the Kingdom gives every community an opportunity to participate in each other's community event.

Saifuddin Thassim urged the participants to devote the day in sympathy with the Palestinians who are being martyred in Gaza. Ahmed from the Colombo-based Serendib Foundation spoke on the significance of Haj and its many sacrifices.

The guests were entertained to a cultural show organized by the Society. Islamic songs and events depicted the true culture of the Muslim community in the island. T. Sam Rasdeen, President of SLES delivered the welcome address, while SLES Secretary Afkar Hassan and Project Chairman Rohan Samath, spoke at the end of the gathering, thanking all the members and guests who attended.

Bonanza for Foreign Currency Account Holders

The Central Bank has revealed a bonanza in order to encourage greater inflow of foreign exchange to the country. With effect from February 1, a payment of a 20% bonus interest on NRFC and RFC deposits will be made as a special incentive to encourage higher levels of inflows into these accounts. The Bank also said the government will consider the introduction of a once-and-for-all concessional final income tax for new foreign exchange inflows, if such inflows are liable for income tax. "This incentive is expected to attract a significant inflow of foreign exchange earnings by Sri Lankans," the Bank added.

These two new measures come hot on the heels of appointing six Lead Managers (financial institutions) to promote investments in Treasury Bills and Bonds among the Sri Lankan Diaspora. These financial institutions have already taken several steps to promote these investments worldwide, the Bank said.

The Bank has also pursued arrangements for currency swaps with some Central Banks in order to boost gross official reserves.

The announcement by the Central Bank was to counter some claims that there would be a significant devaluation of the Rupee or that Sri Lanka will soon apply for an IMF bailout. These claims, the Bank said, are "erroneous and misleading."

According to reports, some economists have been quoted as saying that the current reserve position is similar to the one that prevailed during the times of the controlled economy in 1976. "However, there is no truth whatsoever in such a statement, as current levels of Gross Official Reserves are well above the levels that prevailed before 1977, and, in fact the reserves are even above the levels as at end of 2004," the Central Bank said.

Gross official reserves including ACU balances stood at US\$ 2,560.5 million as at end 2008 compared to US\$ 2,195.8 million at end of 2004. Further, under the latest Yen loan package announced in 2008, the Government of Japan has committed Yen 35,000 million (US\$ 388 million) for various infrastructure projects and programs. "Accordingly, there is no evidence whatsoever to suggest that the Government of Japan will reduce or cut the committed funds for Sri Lanka," the Bank said.

Jaffna - City of the North



Public Library, Jaffna

Jaffna or Yaapana in Sinhala and **Yazhpanam** in Tamil, is the major city of the Northern Province of Sri Lanka. The majority of the residents of Jaffna are Sri Lankan Tamils with a smaller presence of Sinhalese and Sri Lankan Moors.

85% of the population of the Jaffna and Kilinochchi districts were, originally Hindu by religion. The Hindus followed the Saivite tradition. The remainder were largely Roman Catholics, or Protestant Christians. The Tamils are divided along caste lines with the farmer-caste or Vellalar, forming the majority. The maritime caste known as the Karaiyar, dominated the coast.

Most Jaffna tamils belong to the Dravidian cultural group, and the Thai Pongal, the Hindu New Year in April, Christmas, Deepawali, Navarathri and Shivarathri, are some of the religious festivals celebrated. During the colonial period the people of Jaffna were attracted to western culture and these features can be identified even today in Jaffna society.

The traditional dance of the Sri Lankan Tamil community is called Kooththu. These are a variety of stage dramas. Karthavarayan Kooththu, Sangiliyan Kooththu and Poothaththambi Kooththu are some of the famous Kooththus in Jaffna.

The Poothaththambi Kooththu has been staged from the Dutch Colonial era. These arts are mainly focused on the historical values of the community and also provide an entertain opportunity the people. The Villuppattu is one of the famous arts of the Tamil community. Oyilaattam is also a notable variety of dance in the peninsula.

The South Indian form of dance and music is also indigenous to Jaffna. Noteworthy here would be the Bharata Natyam and Carnatic Music in the classical high tradition of Hinduism.