

## Rice: A Savor the South(R) Cookbook

**Michael W. Twitty**

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Southern culinary historian and chef Michael W. Twitty's *Rice* celebrates a global and Southern staple with recipes rooted in tradition and tweaked to meet the times.

Rice, Twitty notes, "changes outfits well to suit the party." It soaks in the flavors that surround it, from savory jus and rich milks to any variety of spices that can be imagined; it marries well with tomatoes, meats, and herbs alike.

As much a history as it is a cookbook, *Rice* roots its staple ingredient in the lore of the Silk Road and in the cultural meldings brought about by the slave trade. Here, rice is a cultural inheritance, something that was "carried in seed form in the braided hair of African grandmothers, [offering] the enslaved a hidden and sacred link to ancestors and their deities." If Twitty's dishes weren't rich and appealing enough on their own, this background information would provide the hook: to understand rice, he shows, is to understand the American South.

Following an introduction that includes suggestions for spice mixes and broths, the book's mouth-watering recipes are for dishes like Liberian Rice Bread, which combines its ground rice with warm spices, mashed bananas, and coconut milk; peanut stew with ginger, chicken, and habanero; Limpin' Susan (a classic Southern okra and rice dish); and Waakye, the West African precedent to Hoppin' John. They pay homage to chefs like Edna Lewis and expand to incorporate global cuisines with dishes like Meyer Lemon Rice with Candied Garlic and Sephardic Pink Rice, which is influenced by the tastes of the Ottoman Empire and the South all at once. Their instructions are direct, adaptable, and approachable.

Sure to delight all Southern and world cuisine foodies, Michael W. Twitty's *Rice* is an invaluable addition to the Savor the South series.

MICHELLE ANNE SCHINGLER (January / February 2021)

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