



## RECIPE REVAMP

# RICE PUDDING GETS A NONDAIRY MAKEOVER

What would rice pudding be without sugar and plenty of heavy cream? As executive chef of Portland, Ore.-based Legacy Health, Brian Seto spent a year developing a spin on comforting, grain-based rice pudding for his new spring menu. It wasn't just lighter but also could be served across multiple special-diet menus, including gluten-free and vegan.

—Marygrace Taylor

## TRADITIONAL RECIPE

1. Heavy cream and whole milk
2. Refined sugar
3. Stovetop cooking

## SHARED

Arborio rice  
Soft, uniform texture

## REVAMP

1. Coconut milk and rice milk
2. Unsweetened applesauce and apple juice
3. Oven baking

**1** To achieve rice pudding's creamy texture without cream, Seto cooked Arborio rice in coconut milk, with some rice milk mixed in to help cut the fat. "In this instance at least, it behaves similarly to dairy milk," he says. He also used the same substitution for a housemade caramel sauce to drizzle on top of the pudding.

**2** To add flavor in a healthier way, Seto blends in a combination of unsweetened applesauce and apple juice. But the juice creates additional liquid. "We did play with the volume of the coconut milk and the apple juice. We wanted there to be enough moisture for the rice to be uniformly cooked and soft, not gritty," Seto says.

**3** Using an oven to cook the pudding in a foil-covered hotel pan at a low temperature allows Seto to produce the volume needed without increasing labor. Oven cooking also leaves the pudding less prone to scorching or drying out. "We figured that was an easier process than someone being glued to a gas burner stirring and stirring," he says.

# Q: How are you saving on food costs without sacrificing quality?

Vince Scimone



Director, Child Nutrition and Warehouse  
Grossmont Union High School District, El Cajon, Calif.

Dewey McMurrey



Executive Chef, Operations  
Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas

Kevin Frank

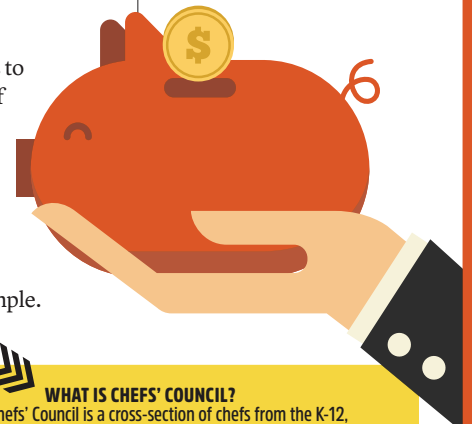


District Chef  
Detroit Public Schools Office of School Nutrition, Detroit

We are piggybacking a bid this year for our frozen, dry and refrigerated foods to make it 2 percent lower than our pricing from last year. To do this, contact your current distributors to see if they already have a bid out that your district can use since, as we discovered, your distributor may not have offered the best available option. We also talked with similarly sized and slightly larger districts, as another way to find out what distributors may not want you to know. When we discovered there was better pricing available, I asked our distributors if they had any other bids we could look at. Once our distributors knew we were shopping around, they each came back and offered a lower piggyback than our current pricing.

Portion size is the easiest way for us [to save] without sacrificing quality. Cutting back just a few ounces overall on a recipe can make a big difference, especially when protein amounts are reduced. Blending proteins with other ingredients to increase yield is another way. Also, try adding one to two ounces of potatoes or mushrooms to every pound of protein. This works best when making ground meat recipes for tacos, for example.

We purchase as much local food as possible. By menuing fresh produce only when in season, we are able to dramatically lower the cost of those particular items while still ensuring the service of high quality, fresh produce. We also freeze locally sourced items so we can save during the winter.



## WHAT IS CHEFS' COUNCIL?

The FSD Chefs' Council is a cross-section of chefs from the K-12, college and university, senior living, healthcare and business and industry sectors. On a rotating basis, our industry experts will answer questions about noncommercial menus and ideas.