

RICE



Mayurbhanj district is known for its diverse varieties of rice, including premium and indigenous types, which hold cultural, nutritional, and economic importance. Rice cultivation is the backbone of agriculture, with most farmers engaged in its production. The district's fertile soil, abundant water resources, and favorable climate make it an ideal region for cultivating rice. The economy of Mayurbhanj District is mostly dependent on agriculture.

Rice is eaten in a variety of forms that include simple steamed rice (raw or parboiled) and **Pakhala Bhath** (watered, lightly fermented rice) to several special dishes including desserts and offerings (bhog) in the temples. Regional favourites (**Mudi**-puffed rice, Mayurbhanj; Torani Kanji in Southern Odisha), festive dishes (short duration varieties like Setka or Sathi used on Nuakhai in Western Odisha; several forms of Pitha made from rice flour in coastal Odisha) and various forms of flattened, puffed, and flaked rice contributes to more than 50% daily caloric requirement of the population.

Rice offers both sustenance and nutritional benefits, with **brown** and **red** rice standing out for their healthful properties. Rice provides protein and a range of vitamins and minerals, including thiamine, niacin, zinc, and phosphorus. Milling and polishing, which transform brown rice into white or polished rice, result in the loss of certain nutrients like vitamin E, magnesium, potassium, and manganese. These nutrients are retained in brown rice. Brown and red rice varieties are valued for their rich fiber content and essential nutrients, including B vitamins, magnesium, calcium, zinc, iron, and selenium.

From humble rice preparations to elaborate feasts, Odisha's rice dishes epitomize a rich cultural heritage and showcase the region's culinary diversity. Some of the popular traditional rice dishes are mentioned below:

Unique Characteristics:

- Indigenous rice varieties are known for their distinctive aroma, taste, and nutritional benefits.
- Traditional methods of cultivation preserve the authenticity and quality of the product.

Farming Practices:

- Both traditional and modern methods, with increasing adoption of sustainable practices like System of Rice Intensification (SRI).
- Dependence on rain-fed and irrigated systems for cultivation.