

A tiny-grained rice called Kalijira is the perfect choice for the busy cook.

The Prince of Rice© Mother Linda's

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A rainbow of rice is available today, but tiny-grained Kalijira (upper left hand corner) is one of the best.

I adore Kalijira, sometimes called the "prince of rice" or *govindabog*. It is my rice of choice. This tiny-grained rice is like a baby basmati. Revered by the Moghuls who built the Taj Mahal, it was reserved for honored guests.

Even though it's small, it's really considered a long-grain rice because its length-to-width ratio is 3:1. Due to its diminutive size, it's very quick-cooking and can be done in as little as ten minutes--perfect for moms with busy lives (like me and you) or for entertaining.



Although Kalijira is an ancient rice, it has only recently become available in the United States. In metropolitan areas, it is sold in gourmet stores like Sutton Place Gourmet, Dean & DeLuca/Balducci's, and Whole Foods but otherwise it is nearly impossible to find.

Kalijira, and several other kinds of heirloom rice varieties, are imported by Lotus Foods headquartered in California. At a recent conference, I got owner Ken Lee to pose with a bag of white kalijira (left) and Ken's new introduction--brown kalijira.

Tip:

Of all places, I have found Kalijira rice at Target. It is sold there as Baby Basmati rice under their Archer Farms brand. It is wonderful and a great substitute if you can't find the one from Lotus Foods.

August 17, 2010:

I finally had the time to call Lotus Foods about why couldn't find Kalijira anywhere...including several health food stores on the East Coast and Target. They told me that the government of Bangladesh has blocked the exportation of this rice because domestic stocks are needed to feed their people. Lotus Foods is looking for alternative sources in India...and I will let me know when and if it becomes available again.