

Rice — the world's staple diet

Rice is a grain eaten by more people in the world than any other grain, making it the world's most consumed staple food, particularly in Asia. Rice is grown in over 115 countries and grows best in those where water is plentiful. Rice is most often grown in fields that are flooded with water, called paddies. Rice can also grow on hills.

Additional Activities

Create a rain stick percussion instrument

Rain sticks are ceremonial musical instruments used to invoke the rain spirits. They are made by people who live in the deserts of northern Chile. In Chile, rain sticks are traditionally made from tubes of dead cactus, and have hundreds of cactus spines hammered into the tubes. Tiny lava pebbles cascade gently through the tube, sounding much like rain.

This rain stick is not traditional. It is made from a cardboard tube (instead of the dried cactus) and aluminum foil (in place of cactus spines).

What you need:

- a tube from a roll of paper towel, or other long cardboard tube
- aluminium foil
- dry rice, or small dried beans like lentils, unpopped popcorn or tiny pasta
- construction paper
- glue
- scissors
- crayons/markers.

What to do:

1. Trace around the end of your tube onto a piece of construction paper
2. Draw a bigger circle around that circle and draw spokes between the circles.
3. Cut along the spokes. Put glue on the spokes and glue onto one end of the tube.
4. Cut a piece of aluminium foil about 1.5 times the length of your tube. Crunch the foil into 2 long, thin, snake-like shapes and twist each into a spiral/spring shape.
5. Put the aluminium foil springs into your tube.
6. Pour some dry rice into your tube.
7. Make another cap from paper (the same as the first 3 steps) and cap your tube.
8. Decorate your tube.
9. Listen to the sound as you tip your rain stick upside down.

Try out different grains and seeds in the tube and note the different sounds.