Prep Time	5 minutes
Cook Time	45–50 minutes
Total Time	50–55 minutes (plus chilling)
Yield	6 servings (about 4 cups)
Difficulty	Easy
Cuisine	American / Classic Comfort

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Ingredients

For the rice pudding:

- ¾ cup long-grain white rice (or Arborio for creamier texture)

- 4 cups whole milk (plus extra for thinning)
- ½ cup granulated sugar
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 1 cinnamon stick (or ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon)
- 1 vanilla bean, split (or 1½ teaspoons vanilla extract)
- ⅔ cup raisins
- 2 large egg yolks, lightly beaten
- ½ cup heavy cream
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter

For garnish:

- Ground cinnamon or nutmeg, for dusting
- Extra raisins, plumped

- Toasted slivered almonds (optional)
- Fresh whipped cream (optional)

Optional flavor variations:

- ¼ teaspoon cardamom or nutmeg
- 1 tablespoon orange zest
- 2 tablespoons dark rum or bourbon (stirred in off the heat)

Equipment Needed

- Medium heavy-bottomed saucepan (3–4 quart) — heavy bottom prevents scorching
- Wooden spoon or silicone spatula
- Small bowl (for tempering the eggs)
- Whisk

- Fine grater or zester (optional)
- Serving bowls or a large dish
- Plastic wrap (for chilling)

Instructions

Step 1: Rinse the Rice — *Time: 2 minutes* | *Intensity: Low*

Place the rice in a fine-mesh strainer and rinse under cool running water for 1–2 minutes, until the water runs mostly clear. This removes surface starch that can make the pudding gluey and ensures individual grains stay distinct within the creamy base.

Step 2: Combine Base Ingredients — *Time: 3 minutes* | *Intensity: Low*

In a heavy-bottomed saucepan, combine the rinsed rice, whole milk, sugar, and salt. Add the cinnamon stick and the split vanilla bean (scrape the seeds into the pot and add the pod too). Stir gently to dissolve the sugar.

Step 3: Simmer the Rice — *Time: 35–40 minutes* | *Intensity: Low–Medium*

Bring the mixture to a gentle simmer over medium heat, stirring occasionally. Once simmering, reduce the heat to low and cook uncovered for 35–40 minutes, stirring every 5 minutes to prevent sticking and scorching. The rice should be tender and the mixture thick and creamy. The pudding will look loose — it thickens significantly as it cools.

Watch the heat: If the milk starts to bubble aggressively or stick to the bottom, lower the heat further. Scorched milk ruins the entire batch. A heavy-bottomed pan and regular stirring are your best insurance.

Step 4: Plump the Raisins — *Time: 5 minutes* | *Intensity: Low*

While the rice simmers, place the raisins in a small bowl and cover with hot water (or warm rum, if using). Let them soak for 5–10 minutes until plump, then drain well. Plumping softens the raisins and prevents them from drawing moisture out of the pudding.

Step 5: Temper the Egg Yolks — *Time: 2 minutes* | *Intensity: Medium*

In a small bowl, whisk the egg yolks and heavy cream together until smooth. While whisking constantly, slowly ladle about ½ cup of the hot rice mixture into the yolk mixture in a thin stream. This gradual process — called tempering — raises the eggs' temperature without scrambling them. If you add the eggs directly to the hot pot, you'll get sweet scrambled eggs.

Step 6: Thicken the Pudding — *Time: 3–4 minutes* | *Intensity: Medium*

Reduce the heat to low. While stirring the pudding constantly, slowly pour the tempered egg mixture back into the saucepan. Cook for 3–4 minutes, stirring continuously, until the pudding thickens enough to coat the back of a spoon. Do not boil — a boil will curdle the eggs. Remove from the heat.

Step 7: Finish and Flavor — *Time: 2 minutes* | *Intensity: Low*

Remove the cinnamon stick and vanilla pod. Stir in the butter until melted and glossy. Fold in the drained raisins and stir in the vanilla extract (if not using a vanilla bean). Taste and adjust sweetness. If using rum or bourbon, stir it in now, off the heat. If the pudding is too thick, stir in a splash of warm milk until it reaches a creamy, pourable consistency.

Step 8: Cool and Serve — *Time: 10 minutes + chilling* | *Intensity: Low*

Let the pudding cool in the pot for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally to prevent a skin from forming (or press plastic wrap directly onto the surface if you like a skin). Serve warm in bowls, dusted with cinnamon or nutmeg and topped with toasted almonds and whipped cream. Alternatively, chill for 2–3 hours for a firmer, cold pudding — equally delicious.

Time & Intensity Summary

Phase	Duration	Intensity
Rinse rice	2 minutes	Low
Combine base	3 minutes	Low
Simmer rice	35–40 minutes	Low–Medium
Plump raisins	5 minutes	Low
Temper egg yolks	2 minutes	Medium
Thicken pudding	3–4 minutes	Medium
Finish & flavor	2 minutes	Low
Cool & serve	10 minutes (+ optional chill)	Low
Total	~50–55 minutes	Easy

Nutrition Information (Per Serving — about ⅔ cup)

Nutrient	Amount
Calories	340 kcal
Total Fat	13 g
Saturated Fat	7 g
Cholesterol	90 mg

Nutrient	Amount
Sodium	145 mg
Total Carbohydrates	48 g
Dietary Fiber	1 g
Total Sugars	26 g
Protein	7 g
Calcium	15% DV
Iron	6% DV