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GALLUP PAKISTAN POLL FINDINGS ON

Most common staple food in Pakistan is wheat, but use of rice is increasing.

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Most Common staple Food in Pakistan is wheat, but use of rice is increasing.- September 8, 2000

According to a recent survey by Gallup Pakistan an overwhelming majority of Pakistanis use wheat as their principal staple for both lunch and dinner. However 20% of urbanites frequently use Rice for lunch and 28% use it for dinner. In the rural areas the use of rice is quite infrequent as a daily staple, and even that is mostly at dinner time: 5% of rural households said they usually ate rice at dinner time. These findings have emerged from a survey conducted by Gallup among a nationally representative sample of nearly 2000 households spread all over the four provinces of the country. The respondents included a cross section of various socio-economic and linguistic groups.

Marketing research experts at Gallup have pointed out that while Pakistan continues to be a wheat eating country, the use of rice in the Pakistani cuisine has risen over the last twenty years. According to a survey conducted by Gallup Pakistan in 1986, only 12% of urban Pakistanis ate rice for lunch, it has now increased to 20%; similarly 17% urban Pakistanis ate rice for dinner, it has now increased to 28%. They attribute the increasing use of rice to somewhat improved standard of living as well as to the narrowing of price difference between rice and wheat during the last twenty years. While the prices of both wheat and rice have risen, the rise in wheat prices has been sharper than the price of rice. It should be pointed out that rice is generally treated as a meal for special occasions by the ordinary Pakistani in most parts of the country. There are some interesting regional variations in dietary habits. The use of rice as a daily staple is more common among those whose mother tongue is Urdu compared to the rest of the country. Another interesting finding of the survey is that while most other groups choose to eat rice more at dinner than at lunch, the preference is quite the opposite among Gujrati speaking population: In their case the use of rice is more common at lunch time compared to dinner time.

The survey was conducted by Gallup Pakistan, the Pakistani affiliate of Gallup International nearly 2000 statistically selected households in both rural and urban areas of all the four provinces of Pakistan. The sample comprised a cross section of various income, education and geographic segments. The text of this report can also be seen on the internet at: www.gallup.com.pk