Rice on Pesach

Why do Ashkenazi Jews consider rice as Chametz?

A: Rice is not Chametz. There are only 5 grains who could become Chametz: wheat, barley, oats, rye and spelt. The Ashkenazi tradition does not consider rice as Chametz. The reason for their abstention of rice has to do with the fact that it was very common to find grains of wheat in the bags of rice, since rice fields were often nearby or within the same fields where wheat was grown. To have wheat mixed with rice was a common problem in regions where they used to have whole wheat and whole rice, because in that state the grains look very similar. Even today, there are some places in the U.S.A., like Arkansas, where they rotate the wheat and rice crops yearly and it would not be unusual then to find grains of wheat in the rice. It’s important to note that this custom was not exclusively Ashkenazi. Moroccan Jews also refrain from eating rice during Pesach, due to the same reasons. As we have mentioned, in order to avoid the possibility of finding wheat in the rice, the Sephardic custom is to check the rice very carefully, three times, before using it for Pesach. Other rice related issues: Refrain from buying enriched rice, because it could contain wheat starch. Brown rice could be used, provided it has no additives.