

Chickpea Congee (Yīng zuǐ dòu zhōu 鷹嘴 豆粥)



As mentioned in our garbanzo salad recipe, the Spanish would often make a batch of chickpeas and use the stock and beans in soups and salads during the week. This recipe uses the chickpea stock plus some chickpeas in a delicious rice congee.

From a scientific perspective the combination of legumes with rice yields all nine essential amino acids, the building blocks for muscle, so it is really nourishing for the body.

The Chinese have been eating chickpeas at least since the 14th century when they were recorded as culinary ingredients for 'Ba'erbu soup' by Hu Sihui in the classic Yuan cookbook 'Principles of Correct Diet' (Yǎn Shàn Zhèng Yào, 饮膳正要). They have also been eaten in the Zhejiang region south of Shanghai for at least 250 years.

Congee is perhaps one of Asia's earliest health foods, beneficial for both old and young. Warm congee improves circulation and helps alleviate the early stages of a cold. You will often see it feature in Kdramas as part of taking care of a sick loved one. It is particularly good for the health of both stomach and spleen, assisting good digestion.

Here we have also added shiitake mushrooms (Xiānggū 香菇) soaked in fermented black bean sauce (Fāxiào hēidòu jiàng 发酵黑豆酱). If you would like to add Chinese herbs, both Chinese yam (Shan Yao 山藥) or Poria (Fu ling 茯苓) would enhance it even further.
Credit: Ceri, Zenxin Master Chef

Key facts:

- Preparation: Overnight soak for rice and mushrooms + 5 mins
- Cooking time: 40 mins
- Total: 45 mins
- Serves: 6-8

Ingredients:

- 1 cup soaked organic brown rice (~300g)
- 6 tbsp 'Simply Natural' fermented black bean sauce (light)
- 1 tbsp organic coconut nectar sugar
- 100g organic shiitake mushrooms
- 100g cooked organic chickpeas
- ~1litre organic chickpea stock
- Poria (Fu ling 茯苓) or (Shan Yao 山藥) if desired.
- Season 'Simply Natural' fermented black bean sauce (thick) as desired

Method:

1. Rinse the rice in a sieve and soak overnight to break down the phytic acid. This allows better uptake of minerals in the digestive tract.
2. Mix together the sugar and the light black bean sauce.
3. Wash the dried shiitake mushrooms and soak in the sauce overnight in the fridge.
4. In the morning drain off the excess liquid from the rice and rinse again.
5. Slice up the shiitake mushrooms, discarding the stalks.
6. Place the soaked rice, chickpeas, sliced shiitake and Chinese herbs in the Thermomix.
7. Top up with the chickpea stock to between 1 to 1.5 litres.
8. Start cooking with timer on 40 mins, temperature to 98°C and speed 1 on reverse.
9. Serve and enjoy!

N.B. This is also made easily in the rice cooker using the porridge setting.