



Black Rice Pudding with Coconut Cream and Palm Sugar Syrup

SERVES 4

Many cultures have some version of rice pudding, but this one from Indonesia has become one of my favorites. It is typically served at breakfast, but it's also a nice dessert treat. It's made from glutinous black rice, a common ingredient in Indonesia that can be found in most Asian grocery stores. I first had this dish in Bali at the home of Nina, a beautiful woman who cooks all day for her entire extended family. She and I had cooked for hours in her outdoor kitchen, set in the middle of a small courtyard separating the houses of her family members. When I thought I could eat no more, she presented me with a bowl of black rice pudding. I didn't expect such a simple dish to taste so good, and although my intention was to only eat a couple bites, I finished the entire bowl. I've made it many times since my return from Bali, and my favorite way to eat it is with a scoop of vanilla or coconut ice cream.

INGREDIENTS

1 cup black glutinous rice

1/4 teaspoon Morton kosher salt

1 cinnamon stick

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

2/3 cup palm sugar, divided (can substitute brown sugar)

1/2 cup coconut cream

1 tablespoon ground cinnamon, for garnish

1/4 cup toasted coconut

PROCESS:

Rinse rice several times in a sieve, picking out any husks or grit. Put rice and 2 cups of water in a bowl to sit 6 hours or overnight. Drain the water and put rice in a pan with 3 cups of water, salt, and cinnamon stick. Bring to a simmer, and cook uncovered for 40 minutes, or until rice is tender. Rice should be a bit "soupy", like rice pudding. Depending on the rice you are using, you may need more water or more cooking time. Discard the cinnamon stick and stir in 1/3 cup of palm sugar (or brown sugar, if using). Stir over the heat for five minutes to allow sugar to dissolve. Then cool to room temperature. Meanwhile, in a saucepan heat the remaining 1/3 cup of sugar with 4 tablespoons of water. Stir until sugar is dissolved and has become a syrup.

To serve, spoon rice into bowls and top with a drizzle of syrup and a spoonful of coconut cream or ice cream. Sprinkle with cinnamon and toasted coconut.