



NUTRITION / DETOXIFICATION

## Coconut Congee: A Nutritious and Medicinal Meal

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### WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

- By offering patients delicious herbal meals that are in alignment with their health goals, patients can take their treatment plans into their own hands and practice it daily.
- Congee is one of my favorite healing foods. It is not only delicious and nourishing, but also can be easily modified to suit dietary and medicinal needs.
- This specific congee recipe is made from a long-grain white rice, such as jasmine rice, water and coconut milk. Coconut congee offers a range of health benefits according to traditional Chinese medicine (TCM).

As a practitioner of Chinese medicine, I am always thinking about the best ways to treat the whole person, and how to link *qi*, *jing*, and *shen* in treatment plans. Often patients come into my office seeking acupuncture, but leave with a comprehensive approach to their health and multiple ways to incorporate these ideals into their daily lives. One of my favorite ways to do this is through food.

By offering patients delicious herbal meals that are in alignment with their health goals, patients can take their treatment plans into their own hands and practice it daily in the comforts of their own kitchen.

### The Benefits of Congee

Congee is one of my favorite healing foods. It is not only delicious and nourishing, but also can be easily modified to suit dietary and medicinal needs. Congee, or rice porridge, is essentially a dish that is made from rice cooked in copious amounts of water or broth until it breaks down to a creamy consistency. This dish can be made sweet or savory and is a great way to get beneficial

herbs into the diet.

This specific congee recipe is made from a long-grain white rice, such as jasmine rice, water and coconut milk. Coconut congee offers a range of health benefits according to traditional Chinese medicine (TCM). First, coconut milk, a key component, is esteemed for its cooling properties, nurturing *yin* energy and replenishing blood fluids, which can be particularly beneficial for individuals experiencing dryness or dehydration.

Congee itself, being easily digestible, gently supports the digestive system, making it a favored choice for those with weak digestion or digestive disturbances. Rice, the main ingredient, is considered neutral and easily digestible, harmonizing the stomach and promoting healthy digestion. The inclusion of ginger in the recipe will warm the body and stimulate *qi* circulation, aiding digestion and dispelling coldness from the body.

The lauric acid found in coconut milk contributes to its antimicrobial properties, potentially bolstering immunity and aiding in the body's defense against infections. Together, these elements create a nourishing dish that not only satisfies the palate, but also supports holistic well-being in line with TCM principles. This recipe is easily modified to fit your patients' health goals by the addition of food-grade herbs such as *yi yi ren*, *chen pi*, or *huang qi*.

### Ingredients

- 1 cup jasmine rice (rinsed)
- 6-10 cups water
- 1 cup coconut milk
- 1 piece of fresh ginger (about 2 inches), peeled and thinly sliced
- Pinch of salt
- Optional toppings for a savory dish: sliced green onions, toasted coconut flakes, cooked chicken or shrimp, cilantro leaves, fresh greens such as spinach, warmed sesame oil, sesame seeds

### How to Prepare

1. In a pot, combine the rinsed jasmine rice, water, coconut milk, ginger slice and salt. Bring the mixture to a boil over medium-high heat, then reduce the heat to low and let it simmer uncovered, stirring occasionally, for about 45-60 minutes or until the rice is very soft and the mixture has thickened to your desired consistency. You can adjust the water ratio to suit your preferences on how creamy to make the congee. If you are adding greens to this dish, coarsely chop them and add to the last five minutes of cooking.
2. Remove the ginger slices and adjust the seasoning if needed.
3. Serve the congee hot, garnished with your choice of toppings.

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