

Receipts to accompany

“Mr. Woodhouse was Right: ‘A Nice Basin of Gruel Together’ Indeed.”

Compiled by Dan Macey

A very good Barley Gruel

Take three ounces of Pearl-Barley, of which makes a quart of barley-water; if it be not white, sift it once or twice; put in four ounces of currants, pick'd and wash'd, when they are plump'd, pour out the gruel, and let it cool a little, then put in the yolks of three eggs well beaten, half a pint of white wine, and of new thick cream half a pint and lemon peel; then sweeten it with fine sugar to your palate; stir it gently over the fire, till it is as thick as cream

—John Knots, *The Cooks and Confectioners Dictionary*, 1724

Plumb Gruel

Take two quarts of water, two large spoonfuls of oatmeal, stir it together, a blade or two of mace, a little piece of lemon-peel, boil it for 5 to 6 minutes—take care it don't boil over, then strain it off and put it into a sauce pan again with half a pound of currans, clean washed and picked. Let them boil about 10 minutes. Add a glass of white wine, a little grated nutmeg and sweetened to your palate.

—Hannah Glasse, *The Art of Cookery Made Plain and Easy* 1747

To Make Water-Gruel

You must take a pint of water and a large spoonful of oatmeal; then stir it together and let it boil up three or four times, stirring it often; do not let it boil over; then strain it through a sieve, salt it to your palate, put in a good piece of fresh butter, brew it with a spoon til the butter is all melted, then it will be fine and smooth, and very good; som love a little pepper it in.

—Hannah Glasse, *The Art of Cookery Made Plain and Easy*, 1796

Catholic Almond Gruel (Basically a sweetened polenta)

Ingredients:

½ cup corn meal
2 cups water
1 stick cinnamon
½ cup sugar
½ cup ground almonds
1 quart milk
3 egg yolks, beaten

Add corn meal slowly to boiling water in saucepan; stir well. Add cinnamon. Cook, stirring constantly, over low heats until slightly thickened. Add sugar, almonds, milk; continue stirring rapidly. Return to saucepan and bring to a boil, stirring constantly.

—William Kaufman, *Catholic Cookbook*, 1965

Barbara

Ingredients:

- *1 cup uncooked barley pearl*
- *4 cups of regular water*
- *1/2 teaspoon cinnamon*
- *2 teaspoons anise powder*
- *1 teaspoon fennel powder*
- *3-4 tablespoons sugar*
- *nuts for decorating (raw almonds, pine nuts, walnuts)*
- *raisins*
- *pomegranate (optional)*

Instructions:

1. *Soak barley overnight*
2. *Rinse water and place barley in a pot and cover with water and let cook.*
3. *Lower the heat to medium once it starts boiling.*
4. *Let it simmer for about 20 minutes and until barley seeds have softened.*
5. *Add spices and sugar, stir and let it simmer for 3-5 more minutes*
6. *Serve hot or warm. Decorate with nuts*

—Wafa Shami, *Palestineinadish.com*

Chicken and Ginger Congee

Ingredients:

- 1 cup long grain rice (white or brown)
- 8 cups water
- 6 chicken thighs (bone-in)
- 1 piece of ginger about 1 inch by 1 inch (2.5 cm by 2.5 cm) - peeled and sliced into large pieces
- salt - to taste
- scallions - for garnish

Instructions:

1. Rinse and drain the rice. Pour the rice into a heavy stock pot (a cast iron pot works great).
2. Add in the water, ginger and chicken thighs.
3. Bring the pot to a boil then immediately turn down the heat. Allow the pot to simmer, covered, for 1-1 1/2 hours, or until the rice has absorbed most of the liquid and has started breaking apart. It will take white rice about 1 hour, and brown rice about 1 1/2 hours.
4. Remove the chicken thighs into a bowl and allow to cool. When the chicken thighs are cool enough for you to handle, shred the meat and remove the bones.
5. Add the shredded chicken back into the congee and mix well.
6. Add salt, if desired.
7. Serve the congee into individual bowls and garnish with green onions, if desired.

—Tina Jui, Theworktop.com