



Tea Times

In this session, we are giving you six historical recipes for our tea time: Rice Balls, Sesame Flatbread (Shaobing), Tofu Pudding (Douhua), Scallion Flatbread, Rice Cakes (Bai tang gao), and Lotus Seed Buns.

We will also have six storytime teas:

Fairy Tale Tea 1: Ch. XI "The Reward of a Benevolent Life," from *Chinese Folk Lore Tales*, by Rev. J. MacGowan

Fairy Tale Tea 2: "Bamboo and the Turtle" from *The Chinese Wonder Book*, by Norman Hinsdale Pitman

Fairy Tale Tea 3: Ch. XLIII "The Dragon After His Winter Sleep" from *The Chinese Fairy Book*, by Dr. Richard Wilhelm

Fable Tea 4: Chapter XIII "The Fox and the Raven" from *The Chinese Fairy Book*, by Dr. Richard Wilhelm

Fairy Tale Tea 5: "How the Moon Became Beautiful" from *Chinese Fables and Folk Stories*, by Mary Hayes Davis and Chow-Leung

Fairy Tale Tea 6: *The Clever Wife*, from the Han Dynasty (202 BC - AD 220)

"No matter how busy you may think you are, you must find time for reading, or surrender yourself to self-chosen ignorance."

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Rice Balls



Ingredients:

10 oz rice flour
5 oz hot water
3 oz cold water (add more, little by little, as needed)

Filling

1 T butter
2 T black sesame powder
1 T desiccated coconut
2 T peanut butter (smooth or chunky, up to your preference)
2 T honey

Sweet soup

12 oz water
4 T granulated sugar
2 T heavy cream
1 small amount shredded ginger (optional)

Directions:

Step 1: Create dough

Measure out glutinous rice flour into a heat-safe bowl. Slowly pour in hot water while mixing it in with chopsticks. Then slowly add cold water, continuing to mix and knead the dough. As the cold water cools the dough down, you'll be able to dive in with your hands.

If the dough is still crumbly, add small amounts of cold water at a time, and knead until you end up with a soft, supple dough ball. It shouldn't be sticky or crumbly. Wrap the dough ball in plastic wrap and let it rest for 30 minutes, up to an hour.

Step 2: Create filling

Melt butter in the microwave for 20-30 seconds, until warm and soft. Add black sesame powder, desiccated coconut, peanut butter, and honey to the melted butter. Stir everything until it forms a paste.

Transfer the filling onto plastic wrap, and spread it out into a flat rectangular layer, about ½ inch thick. Wrap it up and freeze for 30 minutes, so that it can firm up for easy handling later.

Step 3: Create sweet soup

In a large bowl, mix water, granulated sugar, and heavy cream.

Step 4: Prepare filling & dough for rolling

Remove the filling from freezer and cut it into ½ inch squares. If you'd like larger pieces, you can cut into bigger pieces. Take each cut piece of filling and roll it into a ball between flattened palms. Repeat until you've finished all of the filling. If the filling has chilled for too long and is too stiff to handle, let it thaw on the counter until it's soft enough to work with.

Divide the rice flour dough into 2 large pieces, then roll them into round logs. From those two logs, cut the dough into small pieces, about 1-2 inches long.

Step 5: Create rice balls

Take a piece of rice flour dough, roll it into a ball, and then shape it into a little bowl by pressing into the center with your thumb.

Put a piece of filling into the well and pinch the dough over the opening to seal the filling in. Roll it around in your palms a bit to smooth out the seam. Repeat with the rest of the dough and filling.

Step 6: Cook balls

Boil a large pot of water. There needs to be enough water to completely cover the rice balls. When the water has come to a rolling boil, carefully place rice balls into the pot.

Give it an occasional stir to ensure the rice balls don't stick together. While they cook, prepare a bowl of ice water. They are ready when they float, which should take about 3-5 minutes. Pour a little ice water into the pot to temper the water, which will make the rice balls sink a little below the surface and make them easier to scoop up.

Transfer them into the ice water bath with slotted spoon. The shock of the ice water will make them shrink just a bit and keep them from melting down and sticking together in the final soup.

Step 7: Cook sweet soup & add balls

Stir the sweet soup mixture that was prepared earlier, in case it separated or settled while everything else was cooking. Pour the mixture into a clean pot, and add a small amount of shredded ginger. Cover the pot with a lid, and bring the soup to a boil on high heat.

When it has come to a boil, transfer the rice balls to the pot. They only need to warm up for about 30 seconds. Transfer the rice balls into a large serving bowl and enjoy!

Sesame Flatbread (Shaobing)

Ingredients:

1 2/3 c all purpose flour
1/2 tsp sea salt
1 T sugar
1/4 c hot water
1/4 tsp instant yeast
1/3 c cold water
1 T vegetable oil

Oil paste

2 1/2 T vegetable oil
1/3 c cake flour

Topping

4 T toasted white sesame seeds
1-2 tsp black sesame seeds (optional)



Directions:

Making the dough-

Mix flour, salt, and sugar together in a mixing bowl before adding in hot water. Stir until it becomes lumpy.

Add yeast, cold water, and oil; stir until all the liquid is absorbed by the flour, then knead until dough is firm. The dough will be very sticky, so just knead until you're able to form a rough ball. Grease the dough with oil and cover with plastic wrap before allowing it to rest for 20 - 30 minutes.

Making the oil paste-

Meanwhile, heat the oil in a small pan on medium heat until it's hot. Add in the cake flour and stir until smooth. Continue to cook and stir until it darkens a bit and becomes aromatic. Pour the paste into a bowl and let it cool down.

Preheat the oven to 425°.

Forming the bread-

Dust the working surface with a thin layer of flour, then roll the dough out to an approximately 10" x 16" rectangle.

Spread the oil paste by spatula or by hand on the dough, leaving ½ inch on the top.

Roll the dough from the bottom all the way up, pinching the seam at the end to close.

Cut the roll into 6 even pieces and gently press each piece down to flatten a bit, bring the two "cut" sides to the middle, and pinch them together (it's ok if they don't stay together perfectly).

Gently roll each piece out to an oval shape and then fold the top third of the dough down and the bottom third up. After finishing all six pieces, repeat this step again for each piece. Always fold the side with oil paste in so that we end up with a smooth surface. Cover and let rest for 10 minutes.

Put sesame seeds in a small plate and lightly press the smooth side of each piece of dough into the plate of sesame seeds.

Baking-

Roll each piece out to about a 3" x 6" rectangle. Place the pieces on a lined baking sheet and bake for 12 minutes or until the top is golden brown.

If you are storing these for later, simply toast them in a toaster oven for 3 -5 minutes, and they will be just as good as when they're fresh.

If you want to stuff things inside, simply cut the side with a pair of scissors and open it like a book.

Tofu Pudding



Ingredients:

Pudding

4 c unsweetened Soy milk

3 T sugar

1 T gelatin

Syrup

2 c water

1 c brown sugar

3 slices ginger (optional)

Directions:

Pour 1 cup of soy milk into a saucepan and add the 3 tablespoons of sugar. While the milk is still cold, add 1 tablespoon of gelatin, mixing quickly. Stir continuously on medium heat until it's bubbling.

Pour the remaining 3 cups of soy milk into a big bowl, then add the mixture from the saucepan into the soy milk in the big bowl. Mix them well. Cover with a plastic wrap and refrigerate for 6-8 hours or overnight.

Meanwhile, add 2 cups of water, 1 cup of brown sugar, and 3 slices of ginger into a saucepan. Mix it well and turn on the fire medium to low until it's boiling. Set it aside and allow it to cool.

When the tofu pudding is ready, spoon some of the pudding into a bowl, pour some syrup over the top, and enjoy!

Scallion Flatbread

Ingredients

For the dough

4 c plain flour
2 tsp sugar
2 tsp dried instant yeast
1 c + 2 T lukewarm water

For the bread

1 T cooking oil
1 tsp ground Sichuan pepper, or
black pepper
½ tsp salt, or to taste
2 stalk scallions, finely chopped
1 T sesame seeds



Directions:

In a large bowl, mix flour, yeast, and sugar. Pour in water little by little while stirring with a pair of chopsticks (or a fork). Knead with your hand until a smooth, elastic dough forms. Cover the bowl with a wet kitchen towel. Leave to rise in a warm place until doubled in size. It will take about 40 minutes to 1.5 hours, depending on the room temperature.

After the rise, knead on a floured work surface until the dough goes back to its original size. With a rolling pin, flatten the dough into a rectangle shape, as thin as you can. Dust with flour to avoid sticking.

Brush the dough with oil and sprinkle pepper, salt, and scallions on top. Roll the dough into a rope, and coil it in to form a flat circle. Then roll the circle out into a 10-inch disk. Wet the disk with a little water and sprinkle with sesame seeds, then press them down gently. Cover the bread loosely with plastic wrap and allow to rise for around 20 minutes.

Heat up oil in a deep frying pan over a medium-low heat. Place the bread in (the side with sesame seeds facing down), then cover with a lid. Cook until the first side is golden brown, then flip over and cook with the lid on until the second side is done. Turn the bread over one more time to crisp the first side for a few seconds.

Transfer the bread onto a chopping board. Leave to cool for a short while, then cut into pieces. Serve warm.

Rice Cakes



Ingredients:

2 T warm water
1 tsp yeast
1 c water
¼ c granulated sugar
1 c rice flour

Directions:

Add 2 T warm water and yeast to a small dish. Stir to combine and set aside.

Set a small pot on the stove over medium-high heat. Add 1 cup water and ¼ cup granulated sugar and stir until combined.

Once the water starts to boil and the sugar dissolves, remove from the heat.

Add rice flour to a bowl. Pour in the simple syrup mixture into the rice flour. Mix until well combined. Allow to cool.

Once the rice flour mixture has cooled, pour in the yeast mixture. The yeast should have a bubbly layer over the top. Stir to combine.

Place in a warm area and allow the yeast to ferment for 1 hour. The time may need to be increased if you live in a cold climate.

Once an hour has passed, fill a large pot with water and bring to a boil. Place a steamer basket over the pot.

Spray a 6-inch cake pan with non-stick cooking spray. Pour the rice flour mixture into the pan. Place the pan in the steamer basket and steam for 20-25 minutes.

Once the rice cake is done, turn off the heat and allow the rice cake to rest in the steamer with lid on for 2-5 minutes.

Remove the pan from the steamer basket and let it cool. Once cooled, cut into triangle wedges and enjoy!

Lotus Seed Buns

Ingredients:

1 1/2 oz lotus seed paste or red bean paste
1 1/4 c cake or pastry flour (or 3/4 cup + 2 T of all-purpose flour mixed with 2 T of cornstarch)
1 1/2 T sugar
1/4 tsp active dry yeast
1/4 tsp baking powder
1 T rice flour
1/4 c water
1 T heavy cream



Directions:

In a large bowl, mix pastry flour or all-purpose flour mixture with sugar, yeast, baking powder, and rice flour. Add water and stir until incorporated.

Add cream and mix well until a loose, shaggy dough forms. Transfer dough to a work surface and knead until dough is smooth. (If the dough is too dry, add milk a little at a time until it's easy to knead.)

Roll dough into a 1-inch-thick rope. Cut into 10 portions.

Working 1 piece at a time, roll out dough pieces using a rolling pin, dowel, or glass bottle, to 3-inch rounds. Add 1 tablespoon of lotus seed or red bean paste in the middle of each dough round. Wrap dough around filling to fully enclose it.

Set buns seam-side down on a lightly floured or parchment-lined plate or baking sheet. Pressing gently with a dough scraper or the back of a knife, create an indent on the top side of each bun. Cover buns with plastic wrap and let stand for 20 minutes.

Line a steamer insert with parchment paper and set up for steaming. Set buns in the prepared steamer, spacing them 1 1/2 inches apart

Steam buns until puffed and cooked through, about 15 minutes. Serve hot or at room temperature.