



Fa Gao (fāgāo – 发糕) recipe

Ingredients

160g short-grain white rice (sushi rice is best)
1 teaspoon active dry yeast
1 teaspoon granulated sugar (plus an extra 70g)
115ml tepid water
30g plain flour
Vegetable oil for brushing
¼ teaspoon salt
2 teaspoons baking powder
2 drops red food colouring (optional)
Goji berries or golden raisins, for decoration

Directions

1. Add the rice to a medium bowl, cover it with about 2 inches of water, then top the bowl with an overturned plate. Leave to soak overnight.
2. Dissolve the yeast and 1 teaspoon of sugar in the tepid water and let it sit for 15 minutes, or until foamy.
3. Drain the rice and add it to a high-powered blender along with the yeast mixture. Blend until smooth, then add the flour and remaining 70g of sugar. Blend again until well incorporated and the mixture resembles a thin pancake batter.

4. Transfer the mixture to a large bowl, cover with an overturned plate, and leave to ferment in a warm place for about 2 hours, or until it doubles in volume.
5. Lightly brush your steaming vessels (such as small teacups, tart tins, or a muffin tin) with oil to prevent sticking. The rice mixture should look bubbly and airy. Fold in the salt, baking powder, and food colouring (if using), mixing well to combine.
6. Fill each prepared vessel about 70–80% full and top with goji berries or raisins, if using. Set aside while you heat the water in your steamer. (If you don't have a steamer, see the tip below.)
7. When the water in the steamer is hot, transfer the cakes into the steamer. Cover and steam on high for 25 minutes. Do not uncover during steaming.
8. After 25 minutes, turn off the heat and let the cakes rest in the steamer for 5 minutes, still covered.

Tip (if you don't have a steamer):

Use a large baking tin and fill it with about ½ pint of boiling water. Place your steaming vessels inside, then cover the tin tightly with foil, ensuring there are no gaps for steam to escape. Bake in the oven at 180°C for the same amount of time.