

Basic Congee Cooking Directions

Place 1 part of grain into a small, tight-lidded stainless steel, glass, or ceramic cooking pot with 4-8 parts of liquid. Bring to boil, cover and reduce heat to medium-low. Add any other ingredients that need to be cooked at this point. Cook until the congee has the consistency of porridge (slightly soupy but thick). Add light flavors like salt, butter, honey, oil, etc.

Congee with Medicinal Herbs

Reserve 1-2 cups of liquid and cook with medicinal herbs for 10-40 minutes. Bring the herbs to a boil, cover and reduce heat.

Strengthening or “tonifying” herbs cook longer at a lower temperature (low to medium-low heat).

Releasing herbs are cooked for a shorter time at a higher temperature (medium to medium-high heat).

After cooking, strain and stir into the congee.

Cautions & Contraindications

Rice and some beans can be slightly diuretic

Avoid when there is excessive urination

Suggested reading

The Book of Jook. Flaws, B. Blue Poppy Press. ISBN 9780936185606

Healing With Whole Foods: Asian Traditions and Modern Nutrition. Pitchford, P. ISBN: 9781556434303

The Web that Has No Weaver: Understanding Chinese Medicine. Kaptchuk, T. ISBN: 9780809228409

Five Select Herbs from the Grocery Store

Fresh Ginger (Sheng Jiang): Warm Releasing (3-9g)

Releases the exterior & disperses cold

Mild fever & chills, possible runny nose (clear or white discharge), postnasal drip sore throat pain (mild or tickle)

Warms the middle & alleviates nausea

Warms the Lung & stops cough

Cough with clear or white sputum

Resolves toxicity

Overdose of toxic substances or food poisoning

Mint (Bo He): Cool Releasing (6-12g)

Disperses Wind-Heat & clears the head, eyes, & throat

Fever, cough, headache, red eyes, sore throat

Vents early stage rashes

i.e. measles

Allows constrained Liver Qi to flow smoothly

Pressure in the chest or flanks, emotional instability & gynecological problems

Expels turbid filth

Abdominal pain, vomiting, diarrhea, & a thick, greasy tongue coat

Goji Berries (Gou Qi Zi): Tonify Blood (6-12g)

Nourishes & Tonifies the Liver & Kidneys

Sore back & legs, low-grade abdominal pain, impotence, nocturnal emissions, Type II diabetes & metabolic syndrome.

Benefits Essence & Brightens Eyes

Includes dizziness, blurred vision, & diminished visual acuity

Enriches Yin & Moistens Lung

For consumptive cough

Black Sesame Seeds (Hei Zhi Ma): Tonify Yin (9-30g)

Nourishes & fortifies the Liver & Kidneys

Blurred vision, tinnitus, & dizziness

Recovery from severe illness

Increases quantity of breast milk

Nourishes Blood & extinguishes Wind

Headache, dizziness, & numbness

Useful for dizziness than worsens with activity

Moistens & lubricates the Intestines

alone or w/ a Chicken egg

Walnuts (He Tao Ren): Tonify Yang (9-30g)

Tonifies the Kidneys & Strengthens the back & knees

Cold & painful back & knees

Urinary frequency

Settles wheezing by Warming the Lungs & helps the Kidneys grasp Qi

Chronic cough & wheezing that is worse w/ any exertion

Moistens the intestines & unblocks the bowels

Elderly constipation or after febrile disorder