



THAI-INSPIRED SWEETCORN SOUP WITH STICKY RICE

Prep: 1h 20 mins – Soaking: 2 hours – Serves 4 - Easy

400g sticky rice*
2 corn on the cob
220g butternut squash, peeled
½ Braeburn apple
1 onion
3cm ginger
1 red chili
1 garlic clove
2 lemongrass stalks
1 tbsp sunflower oil
850ml vegetable stock
100g sweetcorn, tinned
2 tbsp coriander, chopped
salt
1 tbsp fish sauce
1 lime

Soak the rice at least 2 hours before using: put the rice into a bowl and cover with cold water. The rice can soak between 2 and 10 hours.

For the soup, start by preparing all the vegetables:

For the sweetcorn: place a soup bowl upside into a large mixing bowl, so that it sits like a cupola inside the bowl. Place one corn on the cob onto the platform of the soup bowl and cut down alongside the corn on the cob, so that the corn kernels fall down into the bowl. Alternatively, place the corn on the cob on a chopping board and cut the kernels off on there – this might be messier than using the bowl trick.

Cut the butternut squash into 1cm cubes.

Deseed and peel the apple and cut into 1cm cubes.

Peel and roughly chop the onion.

Peel and finely chop the ginger.

Cut the red chili open lengthwise, deseed and finely chop.

Peel and finely chop the garlic.

Cut the bottom off the lemongrass stalks, remove the first, outer layer and finely chop.

Heat the sunflower oil in a large saucepan and fry the onion, ginger and chili for 3 minutes. Add the garlic and fry for a further 2 minutes.

Add the lemongrass, sweetcorn, butternut squash, apple and vegetable stock. Bring to the boil, cover and leave to simmer for 30 minutes until the squash is soft.

Cover the base of a bamboo steamer with baking paper, making sure the baking paper is a bit bigger than the surface of the steamer so that the edges stick up. Drain the rice and put it onto the baking paper. Cover the bamboo steamer and put it into a large wok over a high heat. Pour some boiling water into the bottom of the wok – it's important that the water level is lower than the platform on which the rice sits, so that the rice is steamed and not boiled. Steam for 20 minutes, then take the basket out of the wok and set aside until needed – the rice will stay warm for 15 minutes if you keep it covered.

Once the soup has cooked for 30 minutes, remove from the heat and blend with a stick blender until smooth. Pour the soup through a sieve in batches, in order to remove any pulp. Season with the fish sauce and with salt.

Mix the sweetcorn kernels with the chopped coriander and season with salt.

Distribute the soup between four bowls, adding a spoonful of sweetcorn kernels to each bowl. Serve the soup with a bit of sticky rice on the side.

TIP: This soup can easily become vegan: just omit the fish sauce and add a bit more salt instead.

*Sticky rice is a special Thai rice, which is steamed and not cooked. Look out for rice kernels that are more white and less translucent than regular rice – it will be marked as sticky rice and you can find it in Asian stores.

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