

Kutsinta (Filipino Steamed Rice Cake)

Kutsinta is a dense, chewy, gummy dessert that is extremely popular among Filipinos. It definitely takes some getting used to, but you can really learn to enjoy this treat especially with fresh or toasted coconut to provide some texture. Kutsinta is good served cold or room temperature.

Kutsinta is traditionally made with lye – an ingredient commonly used in the production or preserving of olives, bagels, pretzels, and fish. It is made by running water through ashes from wood. Its use in food has come under scrutiny as it causes corrosive burns in your stomach and esophagus. In this recipe I substitute lye with baking soda that has been baked to increase its strength. If you prefer to use lye it still easy to obtain in Asian markets (especially Filipino markets). Use 1 ½ teaspoons of lye and take out the baking powder altogether.

For a less sweet product, omit the granulated sugar. You can omit the milk but add 2 ounces of water to the 40 piece recipe and 1 ounce of water to the 20 piece recipe. The milk is mainly used to alter the appearance of the kutsinta giving it a lighter color. You can substitute whole milk or heavy cream.

Ingredients	Makes about 24 pieces	Makes about 12 pieces
White Rice Flour (not sticky or sweet rice flour)	8 ¾ ounces	4 ½ ounces
All-Purpose Flour	2 ¾ ounces	1 ½ ounces
Brown Sugar	7 ounces	3 ½ ounces
Granulated Sugar	3 ounces	1 ½ ounces
Water	1# 6 ounces	11 ounces
Evaporated Milk	4 ounces	2 ounces
Annatto Powder (available in Asian and Latin markets)	5 grams	2 grams
Baking Soda, reduced*	5 grams	2 grams

*To reduce baking soda, spread a layer of baking soda on a sheet pan lined with aluminum foil and bake at 300 degrees for 90 minutes. Keep in an air-tight jar to prevent water from getting to it and avoid touching it as it may irritate your skin.

1. Combine and sift the rice flour, all-purpose flour, baking soda, and annatto powder in a bowl (or a large pitcher with a spout) then add the sugars and whisk well to combine.
2. Combine the water and evaporated milk together
3. Combine the liquid ingredients into the dry ingredients and whisk until lump free.
4. Pour the batter into individual silicone muffin cups leaving a small amount of room at the top.
5. In a steamer, begin boiling the water. Meanwhile arrange the molds in the tier of the steamer off of the stove. This will prevent you from burning yourself while you arrange the molds.
6. Steam the kutsinta batter for 60 minutes. Make sure you have lots of water in your steamer. If your steamer runs out of water you can seriously damage it.
7. When finished, remove from the steamer and dump out any excess water in the molds. Allow to cool until you can handle it and peel away the mold. You can serve it immediately or store it in an air tight container in the refrigerator about 5 days.