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R'benny
Robbers

Brown rice salad with caramelised onions, rainbow chard, parsley & balsamic currants

Season: Autumn/Winter/Spring

Type: Salads

Difficulty: Intermediate

Serves: 24 tastes in the classroom
or 4 adult serves at home

Fresh from the garden: bay leaves, celery tops (or spring onions), garlic, mint, onions, oregano, parsley, rainbow chard, thyme

Recipe Source: Collingwood College, Victoria

Make sure you cook and cool the rice before making the salad. If you don't have a rice cooker, get the rice on first, using the absorption method detailed at the bottom of this recipe.

Equipment:

colander
rice cooker
small pot
spoon
salad spinner
2 clean tea towels
chopping board
large knife
2 large heavy-based
frying pans
wooden spoon
2 small bowls
large salad bowl
lemon juicer
salad tongs
serving bowls
lemon zester

Ingredients:

For the rice:

2 cups long-grain brown rice to 4 cups water
1 L cold water (or vegetable stock or shiitake mushroom stock)
3 bay leaves

For the balsamic currants:

½ cup currants
150 mL cold water
2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar

For the rainbow chard:

4 leaves of rainbow chard
80 mL olive oil
salt and pepper, to taste

For the celery tops and onion:

handful celery tops (or spring onions)
80 mL olive oil
3-4 brown onions
3 garlic cloves
1 tablespoon of olive oil

For the fresh greens:

2-3 sprigs of each of thyme, oregano, mint, parsley (to taste)
6 silver beet leaves
1 lemon
salt and pepper

For the yogurt sauce:

1 lemon
2 cups plain yoghurt

* Put rice on
a s.a.p. as
it will take
30-40 minutes
(no need to wash)

* Use a lidded pan
as no rice cooker

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What to do:

① To cook the rice:

- Put the rice in the colander and wash it under cold water.
- Put the rice into the rice cooker with the cold water (or stock) and bay leaves. Put the lid on the rice cooker and turn it on. The rice will take 30–40 minutes to cook.
- Cool the rice before adding it to the salad.

② To make the balsamic currants:

- Put the currants into the small pot with the water and balsamic vinegar.
- Put the pot on a high heat. Bring to the boil, stirring with the spoon, to reduce all liquid. Cook until the currants are plump.
- Set aside to cool.

③ To cook the rainbow chard:

- Wash the rainbow chard and dry it in the salad spinner.
- Set out the chopping board and large knife. Dampen a tea towel and place it under the chopping board to prevent it from slipping.
- Cut the stalks off the rainbow chard leaves. Chop the stalks into fine slices. Shred the leaves by rolling them into a fat sausage and slicing across the sausage.
- Heat the frying pan with 80 mL olive oil. Add the rainbow chard and sauté the chard until it looks wilted. Season the rainbow chard with salt and pepper to taste.
- Carefully drain any excess liquid off the rainbow chard and set it aside to cool while the rice is cooking.

④ To cook the celery tops and onion:

- Wash the celery tops (or spring onions) and dry them in the salad spinner.
- Finely chop the celery tops.
- Peel the onions and chop them into thin slices.
- Peel the garlic cloves, then finely chop them.
- Put a frying pan over a medium heat. Put a small amount (about a tablespoon) of olive oil into the frying pan.
- When the oil is hot, add the onion. Cook the onion slowly, stirring with a wooden spoon, until it is golden brown. (This will take about 15–20 minutes.)
- Add the celery tops (or spring onion) and chopped garlic. Cook for 3 minutes, then take the frying pan off the heat and set aside.

⑤ To prepare the fresh greens:

- Wash the thyme, oregano, mint and parsley, and gently dry with a clean tea towel.



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- Strip the thyme leaves from the woody stems and pick the oregano and mint leaves from their stems. Discard the stems.
- Put a few of the oregano and mint leaves and some of the parsley into a small bowl and set aside for garnishing.
- Chop the remaining herb leaves with the large knife and put them into the large salad bowl.
- Wash the silver beet and dry it in the salad spinner.
- Finely shred the silver beet leaves by rolling them into a sausage and slicing across the sausage. Add the silver beet 'ribbons' to the herbs in the salad bowl.
- Cut a lemon in half with a large knife, then juice it.

To assemble the salad:

- Add the currants to the salad bowl and use the salad tongs to toss the currants through the salad.
- Add the onion and celery leaf mix and the rainbow chard, then toss.
- Add the lemon juice and the cooled rice, and gently stir.
- Season with salt and pepper to taste.
- Divide the salad into serving bowls and garnish with the remaining herbs. Serve with the yoghurt sauce.

To make the yoghurt sauce:

- Zest a lemon, then cut the lemon in half and juice it.
- Pour the yoghurt into a small bowl and stir in the lemon juice and zest.
- Put the sauce into the fridge until serving.

Notes: If using a rice cooker, the rice will take 30–40 mins to cook. If you don't have a rice cooker, you'll need to use the absorption method below.

Rice by absorption: Pour water into a pot until it covers the rice by about 2½ cm, or do as many cooks do: stick your finger into the pot with the tip of your index finger barely touching the rice. The water level should come just to the first joint of your finger. Cover the pot tightly and bring the rice and water to simmering point over moderate heat, then reduce heat to its lowest. Place a folded pad of kitchen paper over the rice and put the lid on tightly. After 30 minutes, lift the lid and, if all the water has evaporated, remove the pot from the heat and let it stand, still covered, for five minutes.

