Let's get cooking

Pear and Cocoa Rice Pudding

Add pears and cocoa powder to the humble rice pudding to create a lovely yet healthy version of the classic French dessert: poires belle hélène (pears in chocolate sauce). This recipe is low in fat, saturated fat and salt.
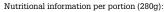
UP TO **60** MINS | V | SUITABLE **1-5** YEAR OLDS

A! Milk*

Nutritional information per portion (280g):

Energy 1033kJ 246kcal 12%	Fat 6g 9%	Saturates 3.3g 17%	Sugars 19g 21%	Salt 0.44g 7%

of an adult's reference intake.
Typical values per 100g: energy 369kJ/88kcal.

Equipment

Weighing scales

Measuring spoons

Small bowl

Can opener

Deep frying pan or wide saucepan

Measuring jug

Wooden spoon

Sieve

Chopping board

Sharp knife

Ingredients

Serves 4

3 x 15ml spoons cocoa powder (not drinking chocolate)

1 x 400g can pears in juice

600ml semi-skimmed milk

1 x 15ml spoon soft brown sugar

1 cinnamon stick (optional)

100g short grain pudding rice OR risotto rice (Arborio works well)

*Presence of allergens can vary by brand – always check product labels. If you serve food outside the home you must make allergen information available when asked.

Top Tip

• Use a non-stick frying pan or saucepan to help prevent the pudding from sticking.

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Method

1. Measure the cocoa powder into a small bowl.

2. Open the can of pears and pour a little of the juice into the bowl of cocoa powder and stir to make a paste. Add a bit more until you have a smooth chocolatey liquid. Reserve the pears until later.

3. Transfer the chocolate mixture to the frying pan or saucepan and add the rest of the pear juice.

4. Measure out the milk and soft brown sugar and add to the saucepan, using some of the milk to 'rinse' the chocolate bowl to prevent wasting any.

5. Break the cinnamon stick in half and submerge in the liquid (if using).

6. Stir to combine the ingredients, then bring to the boil.

7. Meanwhile, measure the rice into a sieve and rinse under a cold tap until the water runs clear (it will be cloudy with starch for the first minute or two).

8. When the chocolatey liquid has boiled, turn down the temperature to medium/low and add the rice. Stir to get rid of any lumps, bring to the boil and reduce the heat to simmer the rice gently, stirring every 5 minutes, for 30–35 minutes. Watch out it doesn't burn on the bottom of the pan and if it has swap the pudding into another pan without scraping the bottom.

9. Meanwhile, chop the pears into small chunks.

10. Add the pears to the pan 5 minutes before the end of cooking and stir.

11. At the end of the cooking time, take the pan off the heat and leave to sit for a further 5 minutes for the rice to absorb any remaining liquid. Remove the cinnamon stick (if using). Taste the rice and cook for another 5 minutes if necessary, add a little more milk or water if it's too thick.

Top nutrition facts

- Milk is a great source of calcium.

- There is more calcium in the body than any other mineral. It's important for healthy bones and teeth, making sure our muscles (including the heart) function well and our blood clots properly.

- Semi-skimmed and skimmed milk have slightly more calcium than whole milk and are much lower in fat.

Something to try next time

- If you prefer fresh pears, swap the pear juice for 200ml of apple juice and add 2 peeled, cored and chopped pears with the rice.

- Try experimenting by adding different spices. This pudding is delicious if you add a vanilla pod – cut it in half, scrape the seeds out and add them to the mixture at step 6 or try adding ½ x 5ml spoon of mixed spice or ground ginger.

- Instead of pears, use apples, bananas or raspberries.

Prepare now, eat later

- As with all rice dishes, you need to be very careful when keeping this for later. If you cool it as quickly as possible (within 1 hour) you can keep it for 24 hours in the fridge. It is delicious served cold topped with low-fat yoghurt or reduced-fat crème fraîche and/or extra fruit such as blackberries, blueberries or bananas.

- If you freeze it, make sure to write on the bag that it must be used straight away after defrosting and always defrost it in the fridge.

Skills used include:
Weighing, measuring, mixing/combining and boiling/simmering.

BDA
The Association of UK Dietitians