

Squash Porridge with Soft Glutinous Rice Balls

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Photo from [My Korean Kitchen](https://www.mykoreankitchen.com)

This week, in celebration of consistently colder weather and the transition from fall to winter, I will be featuring a traditional Korean dessert. This soup or really porridge can be sweet or salty and is made with a special ingredient. I will be using a seasonal squash, Autumn frost, to recreate a dish from my heritage, Hobak Juk, or pumpkin porridge.

This dish is extremely simple and only really requires four core ingredients. Squash, glutinous rice flour, water, and sugar or salt. Glutinous rice flour can be found at any Asian grocery store and even many big chains like QFC or Safeway (an extremely popular/common brand is Mochiko). Glutinous rice is what gives things like Mochi their chewy texture, and will be used in two ways in this recipe to highlight that. First it will be used to thicken the soup, much like how a roux or cornstarch does.

The second way is optional, but I highly recommend it, particularly if you like boba. You mix the glutinous rice flour with water and roll them into thumb size balls before cooking them in the soup. It's best if you have helpers to do this part since it is a bit tedious. You can also do it ahead of time and freeze it on a baking sheet before storing it in a ziploc bag to have on hand. After making this dish you'll want to plop down in front of the fire and enjoy a hearty bowl (or two or three). It's warming, slightly sweet or salty, and will definitely keep you cozy this winter.

Ingredients:

For the porridge:

- 2 cups of Autumn frost pumpkin (or any winter squash), mashed
- 3 cups water
- ¼ cup glutinous rice flour
- ½ teaspoon of salt
- Sugar to taste.

For the rice balls:

- 1 cup glutinous rice flour
- ½ cup hot water
- ¼ teaspoon salt

- 1 teaspoon sugar

Instructions:

1. In a medium bowl, mix 1 cup of glutinous rice flour with $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of hot water using a spatula or large spoon. When it forms a shaggy dough, knead by hand until smooth. Cover with a damp paper towel while you roll out about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch balls (think thumb size, but it really is preference).
2. Place finished balls in another bowl covered with a damp towel. Alternatively, you can make a double or triple sized batch and freeze them on a baking sheet, transferring them to a freezer bag when they harden.
3. Cut your squash in half, scrape out the insides, and either bake (350F) or steam until tender, about 25 minutes.
4. Scrape out the pumpkin and measure out about two cups, mash in a medium sized pot. Add salt and 3 cups of water and boil over medium for about ten minutes. Add in the rice balls, stirring so they don't stick to each other.
5. In a small bowl add your $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of glutinous rice flour and mix with the same amount of water. Once smooth, add it to the pot whisking quickly so it doesn't clump.
6. Cook until the rice balls rise to the surface, taste and add sugar to your liking (some people actually like to make this savory and just add some more salt, but if you want it more dessert like add sugar).
7. Best served warm, but you can store leftovers in the fridge and microwave to reheat it.

Nutrition Corner: Autumn Frost Pumpkin

The ingredient for this week, [Autumn frost pumpkin](#) has a nutritional composition similar to that of a Butternut Squash. Did you know! Butternut and other winter squashes are technically considered fruit! Butternut is packed with vitamins (primarily A and C), minerals, fiber, and antioxidants that aid with many bodily functions.

One cup (205 grams) of cooked butternut squash (similar to other hard winter squash like Autumn frost, Red Kuri, etc.) provides:

Calories: 82

Carbs: 22 grams

Protein: 2 grams

Fiber: 7 grams

Vitamin A: 457% of the Reference Daily Intake (RDI)

Vitamin C: 52% of the RDI

Vitamin E: 13% of the RDI

Thiamine (B1): 10% of the RDI

Niacin (B3): 10% of the RDI

Pyridoxine (B6): 13% of the RDI

Folate (B9): 10% of the RDI

Magnesium: 15% of the RDI

Potassium: 17% of the RDI

Manganese: 18% of the RDI

Source: [USDA](#)