

Thanksgiving Turkey Congee

BY JON KUNG | @JONKUNG

What I love about this recipe is that it takes something so quintessentially American and converts it to something so very Chinese. The result is Thanksgiving flavors in a familiar vessel that still harmonizes with all my favorite congee condiments. It also gives us something to do with all that dry leftover white meat. My first experience with this was when I was younger in Hong Kong. We saw American Thanksgiving the way many Americans saw Cinco De Mayo or St. Patrick's Day. A day of celebratory cosplay where we found an excuse to celebrate through food, gathering, and probably a drink or six. Roast turkeys were a premium, and everyone was in the practice of saving the carcass for congee afterwards. It's been a practice in my home for as long as I can remember, and it is my favorite congee after the classic minced pork and century egg.

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INGREDIENTS

Reserved skin and bones from 1 turkey
3 cups shredded turkey breast
2 cups long-grain rice, rinsed until the water runs clear
3-inch piece of ginger, peeled and sliced
2 tbsp glutinous rice flour or cornstarch

Additional Toppings

Thinly sliced scallions
Soft- or hard-boiled eggs
Pickled bamboo shoots
Kimchi
Chili oil
Preserved chili radish
Any sweet-pickled vegetable
Additional shredded meat
Hong Kong olive vegetable

INSTRUCTIONS

01 To a large pot (preferably nonstick), add the carcass(es) and add 6 quarts (24 cups) of water. Bring to a boil over high heat, reduce the heat to low, and simmer uncovered for an hour (don't bother skimming, as the clarity of the broth is not a priority). At this point, the broth should have a recognizable, if mild, turkey flavor. If not, simmer longer until it does.

02 Season the broth with salt to taste, starting with a teaspoon at a time. You should end up with a flavorful, slurpable broth. Once seasoned to your liking, strain and return the broth to the pot (discarding all solids). You want to end up with 20 cups of broth; if you have more, just save the extra, and if you have less, just make up the difference with water or store-bought broth.

03 Add the rice and ginger to the broth and bring to a boil. Once boiling, add the shredded meat and reduce the heat so the broth is at a brisk simmer. If using glutinous rice flour (or cornstarch) for a creamier congee, add it to a bowl and whisk with ½ cup cold water to form a slurry, then add to the broth and stir to incorporate. Simmer for about an hour, stirring often to prevent the rice from sticking to the bottom of the pot and burning. The congee is finished once it's creamy, the water is completely absorbed by the rice, and the rice has broken down.

04 To serve, ladle the congee into bowls and garnish as desired with the optional toppings.