

Makgeolli (Korean Rice Wine)

Learn to make authentic Korean makgeolli rice wine at home. Traditional fermented rice wine recipe with step-by-step instructions and tips.

3h

PREP

1h

COOK

4h

TOTAL

2

SERVINGS

Medium

DIFFICULTY

Makgeolli (Korean Rice Wine)

Ingredients

- 2 cup rice
- 7 cup water
- 1 tbsp granulated sugar
- 1 tsp yeast

Instructions

- 1 Prepare the Rice**

Rinse 2 cups short-grain rice in cold water, changing the water 3-4 times until it runs clear. Soak the rice in fresh cold water for 3 hours until grains are plump and easily broken between your fingers.
- 2** Drain the rice through a fine-mesh strainer and let it sit for 30 minutes until no water drips from the bottom.
- 3 Steam the Rice**

Steam the drained rice in a bamboo steamer lined with cheesecloth or in a rice cooker for 40 minutes until the grains are tender but still hold their shape when pressed.
- 4** Spread the steamed rice on a clean baking sheet and cool completely to room temperature, about 2 hours, stirring occasionally to prevent clumping.
- 5 Prepare the Fermentation Setup**

Sterilize a large glass or ceramic container by pouring boiling water over all surfaces, then rinse thoroughly with cool water and dry completely.
- 6 Make the Nuruk Mixture**

Crush 1 tablespoon nuruk between your fingers to break up large pieces. Add to 7 cups filtered water and stir well, then let stand for 1 hour until the nuruk softens and the water becomes cloudy.
- 7 Combine for Fermentation**

Add the cooled rice to the nuruk water mixture in the sterilized container. Stir gently with clean hands until the rice is evenly distributed throughout the liquid.
- 8 Start Active Fermentation**

Cover the container with a clean kitchen towel or loose-fitting lid, leaving it slightly ajar for air circulation. Place in a cool, dark spot at 18-24°C (65-75°F).

- 9 Stir the mixture twice daily with a clean wooden spoon for the first 3 days only. You should see bubbling and foam forming as fermentation begins.
- 10 **Continue Fermentation**
After day 3, cover tightly and check daily without stirring. Fermentation is complete in 10-14 days when bubbling stops and the liquid tastes mildly sweet and alcoholic.
- 11 **Strain and Sweeten**
Strain the fermented mixture through a fine-mesh strainer into a clean bowl, pressing the rice solids gently to extract liquid. Stir in 1 teaspoon sugar until dissolved.
- 12 **Final Aging**
Transfer the strained makgeolli to clean glass bottles, leaving 2 inches of headspace. Refrigerate for 3-5 days to develop carbonation and mellow the flavors before serving chilled.

Tips

Use only short-grain or glutinous rice for authentic texture and flavor - long-grain rice produces inferior results.

Maintain strict sanitation throughout the process, sterilizing all equipment with boiling water to prevent unwanted bacterial growth.

Fermentation temperature should stay between 65-75°F (18-24°C) for optimal yeast activity and flavor development.

Break up nuruk pieces thoroughly and let them soak in water for at least an hour to activate the fermentation cultures properly.

Stir the mixture twice daily during the first three days only - over-stirring later can introduce unwanted bacteria and affect flavor.

Store the fermenting mixture in a cool, dark place away from direct sunlight and temperature fluctuations.

Taste-test daily after day 7 to monitor fermentation progress and stop when the desired balance of sweetness and alcohol is achieved.

Always serve makgeolli chilled and gently stir before pouring to distribute the settled rice sediment evenly.