

TRANSCONTINENTAL RAILROAD WORKER FOOD – CHICKEN CONGEE (JOOK) TECHNIQUES

The railroad workers ate a lot of chicken soup with rice because it settles upset stomachs, soothes sore throats and warms chilled bodies. Railroad workers crave it when winter arrives and when they feel a cold coming on. Congee, also known as *Jook* in Cantonese, is a popular and delicious choice for breakfast, lunch or late night snack.

This one-pot wonder soup heals and is delicious to eat. The longer you cook it, the thicker it gets, just add water. Easy to digest, jook is fed to babies, the sick and the elderly.

Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) Health Benefits

- Strengthens the lungs and relieves asthma
- Strengthens the spleen and replenishes *chi*, the life force of good health
- Stops wheezing and dispels phlegm
- Soothes coughs

Preparing the Rice Porridge Congee Ingredients:

1. Rub 1 tablespoon of vegetable oil with 1 cup of uncooked rice for 15 minutes in a bowl; this will help rice not stick to bottom of pot when cooking. Add water to cover rice and let soak for 1-2 hours. Drain.



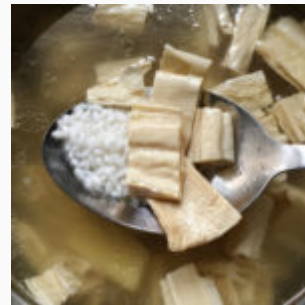
2. Soak the dried bean curd sticks in warm water until re-hydrated and soft, about 1-2 hours.



3. Once dried bean curd has softened, drain well and cut into either narrow strips or 1-2" lengths.



4. Put rice, raw chicken, 7 cups water, and the hydrated cut bean curd to a large pot.



5. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat.
6. Reduce heat to a simmer and cover the pot, leaving a small gap open.
7. Simmer for 1 hour and 15 minutes. Stir well.
8. Remove chicken thighs and shred meat. Put chicken meat back into the rice porridge congee. Stir to combine.
9. Serve hot.

Garnish or offer your rice porridge congee with chopped green onions, black pepper, soy sauce, chili sauce, and pickled vegetables.

Chinese railroad cooks also made rice congee with wild game such as pheasant, duck, deer, and salmon which were delicious and did not cost money. Adding fresh ginger removes game flavors.