

## Coconut Glutinous Rice Balls Recipe (Indonesian Mendut Dessert Recipe)

**Ingredients:** Makes 12 cakes

**Oil for brushing tray:**

24 banana leaves, softened and cut 17 x 24 cm (7 x 9½ inch)

3 pandan (screwpine) leaves, cut into 4 cm (1½ inch) lengths

150 ml (¾ cup) coconut milk

Pinch of salt

**Coconut filling:**

175 g (1¾ cups) young white part of grated coconut

125 g (½ cup + 1 tablespoon) palm sugar, chopped

1 tablespoon sugar

1 drop vanilla essence

Pinch of salt

75 ml (¼ cup + 2 tablespoons) water

**Colored dough:**

200 g (2 cups) white glutinous rice flour

Pinch of salt

200 ml (scant ¾ cup) coconut milk

a few drops red or green food coloring

**Method:**

Place coconut filling ingredients in a saucepan and cook over moderate heat until the mixture is sticky enough to be shaped into balls without disintegrating, about 20 minutes. When cool enough to handle, shape into 24 balls (each about 1 tablespoon). Set aside on a plate. To make colored dough, place glutinous rice flour and salt in a mixing bowl. Heat coconut milk to boiling point and pour onto the flour, mixing well with your hands to form a smooth, pliable dough. (If the mixture seems a little dry or a touch crumbly, sprinkle a few drops of warm water over the dough and knead it in). Divide mixture into two equal parts. Tint one portion either pink or green by kneading in a few drops of food coloring. Leave the remaining portion white. Cover dough with a clean damp cloth. Lightly brush a baking tray with oil. Roll the uncolored dough into a long roll and pinch off 12 roughly equal-sized pieces. Roll them in your palms into smooth balls. Arrange on the oiled baking tray and cover with a clean damp cloth. Form the colored balls likewise. To fill dough balls, place one in the palm of your hand and, using the thumb and forefinger of your other hand, carefully pinch the ball of dough to create a well large enough to accommodate a ball of coconut filling. Pinch the dough around the ball to enclose it completely. Fill all the dough balls this way, returning them on the oiled tray as you make them. To wrap, lightly brush the inside of a banana leaf with oil. Tuck a piece of pandan leaf in the center and arrange two filled balls (one colored and one white) side by side. Fold the parcel tum-style\* but before sealing the packets, carefully pour in 2 tablespoons of coconut cream with the salt added. Arrange mendut packets in a steamer tray and cook over moderate heat for 20 minutes. Serve warm or at room temperature.

**Double-wrapped banana leaf packet (tum style\*):**

The banana leaf is a very versatile cooking material and is widely used in Indonesian and Asian kitchens. It is frequently used to wrap food for grilling, steaming or placing directly on hot coals. Firstly, clean the banana leaf and cut it to the required size. Then dip it in boiling water or hold it directly over a gas flame until it softens. Frozen banana leaves are becoming more available outside the tropics but if you are unable to find any, wrap the food in baking paper and then aluminum foil. Unfortunately, the foil lacks the moisture and subtle flavor imparted by the banana leaf.

Method:

Place the filling in the center of a large rectangle of clean and softened banana leaf. Pull the side facing you to touch the opposite side in the middle and pleat in one side. Pleat the other side in. Fold one wing of the pleat to the front of the package. Fold the other wing to the back of the package. Place the package in the center of a smaller strip of banana leaf and fold up to hold the pleats together. Secure with a toothpick. Tuck in odd corners and prepare for steaming.

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