Spinach and Sesame Rice Balls

8 small rice balls, 2 per portion · Active 30 min · Total 2 hr

Skills: Intermediate

Ingredients

- 1 cup short-grain white rice (190 g)
- 1 1/4 cups water (300 ml), or package amount
- 4 packed cups baby spinach (120 g)
- 1 tablespoon rice vinegar (15 ml)
- 1 teaspoon sugar (4 g)
- 1/4 teaspoon fine salt
- 1 tablespoon toasted sesame seeds (9 g)
- 1 teaspoon toasted sesame oil (5 ml)

Set out

Saucepan with close-fitting lid, Sieve, Clean towel, Shallow bowl, Tray or shallow container for chilling, Second small saucepan for spinach

Allergens

Sesame. Check labels and substitutions.

Make it

1. Rinse rice according to the package. Put in the saucepan with water, bring to a simmer, cover and cook on low for 15 minutes or according to the package. Rest covered off the heat for 10 minutes.

2. Meanwhile, put washed spinach in a small pan with 1 tablespoon water and stir over medium heat for 1–2 minutes until wilted. Drain, cool briefly, squeeze very dry and chop finely.

3. Mix vinegar, sugar and salt. Turn cooked rice into a shallow bowl and fold in the seasoning, spinach, sesame seeds and sesame oil.

4. As soon as the rice is safe to handle, moisten clean hands and shape eight small balls. Arrange in one layer in a shallow container and refrigerate promptly, aiming to cool the rice quickly within 1 hour of its original cooking. Resting and shaping are part of that hour; do not add an hour of cooling on the counter. Keep chilling until fully cold.

5. Pack two balls per portion and keep refrigerated until eaten.

Protect the shape

Use a rigid box and place the balls in a single layer. Small paper muffin cases can keep them from sticking to each other. They are easier to pick up with clean fingers or a fork than a deep, compressed mound of rice.

A useful detail

Total includes an estimated hour of refrigerator chilling. Start cooling promptly and aim to cool within 1 hour of original rice cooking, including resting and shaping. Actual cold temperature controls packing; never wait on the counter for the estimate to pass.

Keep it well

Keep promptly chilled rice balls at 40°F/4°C or below and eat cold within 24 hours of the original rice cooking. Transport with two cold sources and refrigerate on arrival. Do not leave at room temperature through a shift. The vinegar does not make them shelf-stable.