Gifts from the Far East: A deliciously creamy rice pudding gets its lushness from sushi rice; delicate bundles of spinach flaunt the flavors of soy and sesame.

1962

RICE PUDDING '21'

Adapted from the '21' Club

SERVES 8

ACTIVE TIME: 25 MIN

START TO FINISH: 1¼ HR (INCLUDES COOLING)

If you love rice pudding, you'll swoon over this unusual version from the '21' Club in New York City. Whipped heavy cream lends body and creates a browned top that suggests toasted marshmallow.

- **½ cup plus 2 tablespoons (5 oz) sushi rice (see Shopping List, page 144)**
- **1 qt whole milk**
- **⅛ teaspoon salt**
- **½ cup sugar**
- **1 teaspoon vanilla**
- **⅔ cup chilled heavy cream**

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: **an 11- by 8- by 2-inch flameproof gratin dish (2-qt capacity)**

Rinse rice in a fine-mesh sieve and drain well. Bring milk and salt just to a simmer in a 3-quart heavy saucepan over moderately high heat, stirring occasionally. Stir in rice, then reduce heat to very low and cook, covered, stirring occasionally, until rice is very soft and creamy, 45 to 50 minutes. Pour rice into a large bowl, then stir in sugar until dissolved. Cool to room temperature, stirring occasionally to prevent a skin from forming on top, about 1 hour. Stir in vanilla.

Preheat broiler.

Beat cream with an electric mixer until it holds soft peaks, then fold half of cream into pudding. Pour pudding into gratin dish, smoothing top. Spread remaining cream evenly over pudding and broil 1 to 2 inches from heat until top is browned, about 1 minute. Serve immediately.

COOKS' NOTE: **Rice pudding can also be portioned into 8 (8-ounce capacity) flameproof dishes.**

1963

SPINACH WITH SESAME SHOYU DRESSING

SERVES 6 (FIRST COURSE)

ACTIVE TIME: 30 MIN START TO FINISH: 30 MIN

With their light, tangy sesame dressing, these delicious little spinach cakes needn't only accompany a Japanese meal. They also make a delightful prelude to a hearty entrée like steak or chops. (See menu suggestions on page 14.)

- **2 lb baby spinach**
- **2 tablespoons sesame seeds, lightly toasted (see Tips, page 139) and cooled**
- **¼ cup peanut oil**
- **1½ tablespoons rice vinegar (not seasoned)**
- **2 tablespoons mirin (Japanese sweet rice wine)**
- **2 teaspoons shoyu (Japanese all-purpose soy sauce)**
- **½ teaspoon Asian sesame oil**
- **⅛ teaspoon salt**

Rinse spinach and drain lightly. With water still clinging to leaves, cook in 3 batches in an 8-quart pot over moderately high heat, covered, turning occasionally with tongs, until wilted and bright green, 2 to 3 minutes per batch. Transfer as cooked to a colander, then rinse under cold water until cool and drain well. Squeeze small handfuls of spinach to remove as much moisture as possible, then in 3 batches wrap spinach in several layers of paper towels and squeeze to remove even more moisture. Coarsely chop spinach.

On a 16-inch sheet of plastic wrap, form half of spinach into a 13½- by 1½-inch log. Repeat with remaining spinach on another sheet of plastic wrap. Use plastic wrap and your hands to roll, compact, and smooth sides of logs. Remove and discard plastic wrap. With a sharp knife, cut each spinach log crosswise into 9 (1½-inch) pieces (18 total), then arrange, cut sides up, on a platter, reshaping and smoothing mounds with your fingers.

Finely grind 2 teaspoons sesame seeds in a blender, then add peanut oil, vinegar, mirin, shoyu, sesame oil, and salt and blend until combined well. Spoon 1 teaspoon dressing over each spinach mound, stirring dressing occasionally (it will separate as it stands), and sprinkle mounds with remaining 4 teaspoons sesame seeds.

COOKS' NOTES: **Spinach can be cooked 1 day ahead, then cooled, drained, and kept in a bowl, covered and chilled. Bring to room temperature before proceeding, about 1 hour.**

- **Dressing can be made 1 day ahead and chilled, covered. Bring to room temperature, about 1 hour, and whisk to combine before using.**

FOOD STYLING: ANNE DISRUDE PROP STYLING: SIBELLA COURT WARDROBE: MIA MORGAN