

Food skills

Coconut

Coconut has many uses in cooking, but the white fleshy part can be eaten fresh. In young fresh coconuts it is soft and sweet, and in older, mature coconuts the flesh is used fresh or dried and grated, which is referred to as desiccated coconut. Coconut cream, milk and oil can all be extracted from the white mature flesh.

Coconut water is the clear liquid inside the coconut and can be used for drinking (young fresh coconuts) and cooking (mature coconuts).

Coconut cream and coconut milk are different. Coconut cream has a thicker texture, less water and is half fat, most of which is saturated fat.

Coconut milk and 'lite' versions of coconut cream are essentially watered-down coconut cream with added thickeners.

Save money by buying coconut cream and diluting it with an equal amount of water. Check the ingredient list on the can and select the variety with the highest % of coconut. It's important not to dilute coconut cream with too much water, or the flavour and texture will be affected.

How to dilute coconut cream



1 Can of coconut cream.



2 Measure $\frac{1}{4}$ cup coconut cream and $\frac{1}{4}$ cup water. This is called 50:50 dilution with water, or half and half.



3 Mix together well.

Tip To thicken diluted coconut cream, add a teaspoon of cornflour to $\frac{1}{2}$ cup diluted coconut cream. Bring to the boil stirring nonstop until the coconut cream has thickened.



5 This yields $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of diluted coconut cream.



6 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup coconut cream has 40.4 grams fat. Whereas $\frac{1}{2}$ cup diluted coconut cream with water has 20.2 grams fat.



7 Pour leftover coconut cream into an ice cube tray.



8 Place in the freezer. When frozen store in an air tight container in freezer.



Coconut chicken slaw (serves 4)

Ingredients

¼ cup coconut cream

¼ cup water

1 tablespoon crushed ginger

2 cloves garlic, peeled and crushed

1 teaspoon fish sauce (optional)

½ red onion, peeled and finely sliced

2 tablespoons vinegar

500g cooked chicken, shredded

¼ cabbage, sliced

2 carrots, finely sliced

½ cup chopped fresh coriander

¼ cup chopped fresh mint

3 tablespoons lemon or lime juice

Method



Place coconut cream, water, ginger, garlic and fish sauce into a small saucepan and bring to a boil. Remove from heat and cool.



Marinate the red onion in the vinegar for 30 minutes.



Mix together the remaining ingredients, including the marinated onion and coconut sauce.



Cover and chill in refrigerator until ready to serve.

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