



ANSON MILLS

Horchata with Strawberries and Toasted Almonds

Yield

6 servings

Time

About 30 minutes of active time, plus overnight to soak the rice and almonds

Cooking Remarks

A Vitamix or other superblender works best at making this horchata. If you have a standard blender, please use our recipe for horchata made with rice flour, and add the strawberry purée and toasted almonds to garnish.

Any combination of Carolina Gold rice or rice grits that weighs 5 ounces will work for this recipe.

We find that blanched almonds or, worse yet, blanched and slivered almonds, are often stale by the time they find their way to store shelves. So to guarantee that the nuts in our horchata taste sweet and pure, we prefer to start with whole skin-on almonds and blanch and peel them ourselves. The recipe calls for only 4 ounces of almonds, so the process of peeling them is not overly time- or labor-intensive—and it's most certainly worth the trouble. For the almonds that are used as a garnish, don't be shy about giving them deep, dark color—pan-toast them until they're richly browned and super-fragrant—and then mince them as finely as you possibly can so that they glide easily up the straw.

Equipment Mise en Place

For this recipe, you will need a digital kitchen scale, a small saucepan, a fine-mesh strainer, a small bowl, a medium heatproof bowl, a Vitamix or other high-powered blender, a large bowl, a rubber spatula or spoon, a 1½-quart pitcher or jug, a small skillet, 12-ounce drinking glasses, and drinking straws (optional).

Ingredients

4 ounces (1 scant cup) whole unpeeled almonds
5 ounces (¾ cup) Anson Mills Carolina Gold Rice or Carolina Gold Rice Grits
2 (2-inch) cinnamon sticks
5 cups spring or filtered water
3½ ounces (½ cup) plus 2 tablespoons sugar
¼ teaspoon fine sea salt
12 ounces ripe strawberries
Ice, for serving

Directions

- 1.** Bring a small saucepan three-fourths full of water to a boil over high heat. Add the almonds and blanch just until the skins loosen, about 30 seconds. Immediately drain the almonds in a fine-mesh strainer and rinse them under running cold water until cool enough to handle. Pop each almond out of its skin by pinching the wide end. Dry the almonds with paper towels. Measure 1 ounce of skinned almonds into a small bowl and let them dry, uncovered, at room temperature overnight. Combine the remaining 3 ounces of skinned almonds, the rice, and the cinnamon sticks in a medium heatproof bowl. Bring 3 cups of the water to a boil and immediately pour it over the almond-rice mixture. Let cool to room temperature, cover with plastic wrap, and refrigerate overnight.
- 2.** Remove and discard the cinnamon sticks from the almond-rice mixture and pour the entire contents of the bowl into your superblender. Add the 3½ ounces (½ cup) of sugar and the salt and blend on high speed until the mixture is as smooth as it can be, 1 to 2 minutes. Set a fine-mesh strainer over a large bowl and pour in the blended mixture, and then transfer it to a 1½-quart pitcher. Pour in the remaining 2 cups of water, cover, and refrigerate until cold, or for up to 3 days.
- 3.** When you are ready to serve, in a small, dry skillet, toast the reserved almonds over medium heat, shaking the pan frequently, until deep golden brown and richly fragrant, about 10 minutes. Transfer to a cutting board and let cool, and then mince them as finely as possible. While the almonds cool, hull and slice the strawberries. Turn them into a medium bowl, add the 2 tablespoons sugar, and toss to combine. Let stand at room temperature, tossing occasionally, until the berries are softened and juicy and the sugar is mostly dissolved, about 10 minutes.
- 4.** Transfer the strawberries with their juice to the blender and pulse to a slightly lumpy purée, scraping down the blender as needed; do not over-purée the berries, which creates an undesirable foaminess. Pour the strawberry purée into a small bowl.
- 5.** To serve, stir the chilled horchata to recombine. For each serving, fill a 12-ounce drinking glass about two-thirds full of ice. Spoon about 1 teaspoon minced almonds into each glass and fill the glass about two-thirds full with horchata. Spoon in about ¼ cup of the strawberry purée, and then top off with more horchata. Sprinkle with a pinch of two of minced almonds and insert a drinking straw (if using) into the glass. Stir and slurp.