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Rice Balls

Rice Balls—enjoyed in the Far East for centuries—are recognized as one of the most balanced foods. It is the quality, preparation and especially the combination of ingredients that give rice balls their unique qualities. The traditional rice ball is made of brown rice with umeboshi plum in the centre and nori or sesame seeds as an outer coating. Rice balls are the most perfectly balanced prepared human food. Each rice ball contains the 1:7 ratio of minerals, proteins, fats and carbohydrates required for optimal human health.

Rice Balls are the PERFECT fast food for today. Kept in a sealed airtight plastic container, Rice Balls last 5-6 days if stored overnight in a cool temperature, such as a refrigerator or cool basement. Stored in this way, they do not need refrigeration during the day, so you can take them with you everywhere and go! Just take them out of cool storage in the morning, and throw them in your bag or car or keep them in your desk at work, and if any are left-over, place them back in the refrigerator at the end of the day. Depending on conditions, they may also last about 3-4 days without any refrigeration at all, and so are perfect for camping and traveling. Older rice balls can be added to soups or delicious rice porridge can be made from them. Eat them as a snack or as part of a meal and feel the sustaining, strengthening energy of these Ancient Japanese Healing Foods!

“Rice supplies a metal-type (autumn) energy and a sweet taste. The umeboshi in the center supplies the sour (spring) taste of the plum, the summer energy of the shiso leaves with which it is pickled, and the salty taste acquired during the pickling process. The nori supplies a more floating-type energy and a slightly bitter taste. This combination of factors produces a food that is particularly well-balanced and thus it is possible to eat only rice balls for days without feeling tired or producing any troubles.”

Michio Kushi. *Macrobiotic Home Remedies*. p. 45,
Japan Publications, Inc., 1985

In fact, Michio Kushi—the international expert on Macrobiotics—recommends brown rice and sea vegetables, and rice balls, as the top foods for survival—in his words “Bottom Line Emergency Foods.” Mr. Kushi states that rice balls with umeboshi plum and nori can help sustain a person for two or three weeks, without much physical weakness. Mr. Kushi also explains that these foods are “Bottom Line Foods For Spiritual Development” and including them as part of a healthy diet, in combination with reflective activities such as meditating, may help bring spiritual clarity.

Michio Kushi. *Unusual Illnesses*. Lecture, Video.
1984 Distributed by The Kushi Institute

Plum Of A Hang-Over Cure!

Have you ever over-indulged, despite your best intentions to just “dabble” in life’s little pleasures? Don’t despair, nature has provided a wonderful, safe remedy for hang-overs, sugar-blues, food poisoning, constipation and the common cold. The name of this mysterious cure-all is the **Umeboshi Plum**.

Umeboshi Plum is a traditional, naturally processed, pickled plum used throughout Japan, China and Korea for its incredible health-promoting properties. The word “umeboshi” literally means “dried ume.” “Ume” has been translated as “plum,” but is actually a species of apricot. The plums are pickled, left outside to be exposed to the elements of the sun and evening dew, packed in barrels with crude sea salt and shiso leaves, and then pressed by a weight. The combination of these elements, pressed over a period of at least six months, creates the natural bacteria, enzymes, organic acids and powerful alkaline qualities of the Umeboshi Plum. In fact, Umeboshi Plum has been called “The King of Alkaline Foods.”

Alkalinity is an important factor for health. We want our blood to be just slightly alkaline (about 7.35). If the blood is too acidic, then harmful bacteria, viruses, fungi, parasites, fats and mucous thrive and grow, contributing to degenerative blood and disease. Our blood can become too acidic from consuming an excessive amount of sugar, refined flour products, alcohol, toxins and animal foods. This condition worsens with an inadequate intake of oxygen, often caused by sedentary lifestyles.

Umeboshi is rich in organic acids, especially citric acid and phosphoric acid. Organic acids help ensure a rapid breakdown of an excess of acids (such as lactic acid and pyruvic acid) in the body. Such an effect helps to balance, or often eliminate, the symptoms of excessively acidic conditions, including a hang-over, fatigue, morning sickness, car/sea sickness, some headaches, stomach troubles and anemia. In fact, an Umeboshi Plum that has been aged 6 to 7 years has been known to stop diarrhea.

In the past 40 years, scientific evidence for the health benefits of Umeboshi has been uncovered. In the 1950s Japanese scientists extracted a powerful antibiotic substance from Umeboshi, and in 1968, a component in Umeboshi was found to have germicidal effects on the tuberculosis bacteria. And let’s not forget to mention that this natural antibiotic, antiseptic and digestive aid is also known to be beneficial for water contamination, liver function, prevention of ageing (anti-oxidizing effects), general detoxification, carbon monoxide poisoning, skin diseases such as eczema, lack of appetite, bad breath and dysentery, typhoid, and paratyphoid.

So how does one take an Umeboshi Plum? If you thrive on a salty/sour taste, you may be one of the few courageous souls that prefer to eat it straight from the jar. Most of us, myself included, prefer a more gentle, balanced approach. For a hang-over, nausea, vomiting, vertigo etc., soak an Umeboshi plum for 5 minutes in hot water or in Kukicha/Bancha tea. Then, drink the liquid and eat the plum together. This is the most common method. One Umeboshi Plum is known to Cure a hang-over. Umeboshi Plum is also excellent mixed in with brown rice as a morning porridge or eaten as part of your main meal of the day. For basic health, the general recommendation is about 2-3 Umeboshi Plums per week, but if you have a specific health concern, please consult a Macrobiotic Consultant for personalized dietary recommendations. Umeboshi Plums can be bought at major health food stores. Always choose those of the highest quality, such as Mitoku Macrobiotic or Koyo.

So why suffer? Recover with Umeboshi Plums!

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