

Omu Raisu

ANOTHER USE FOR SOFRITO

Omu raisu (rice omelet) is one of the most popular dishes in Japan, both at home and in restaurants. To Western ears it doesn't sound immediately compelling—lightly fried rice laced with ketchup and covered with a sheet of runny eggs. It's slathered with more ketchup to finish, which is probably why I jumped on the bandwagon almost immediately and have never looked back. My childhood recollections don't include any warm and fuzzy comfort dishes, so when I feel down and out or just need some food love, this is the dish I invariably turn to.

Using sofrito as the base for the rice filling gives it a luxurious silky texture and depth of flavor that it doesn't always have. You can incorporate any veggie or meat that you like. I've used the classics. As far as I'm concerned, this dish is a vehicle for runny eggs and loads of ketchup.

Makes 4 servings

140 grams (½ cup)

SOFRITO (page 108)

150 grams (5 ounces)

skinless, boneless chicken breast, cut into very small dice

720 grams (4 cups) **STEAMED**

RICE (page 191) (day-old rice is fine)

100 grams (3½ ounces)

frozen peas

Lots of ketchup

8 large eggs

Vegetable oil spray

- 1 In a wide sauté pan set over medium-high heat, warm the sofrito until it starts to sizzle, then add the chicken and cook through, about 4 minutes.
- 2 Add the rice. Mix and stir until the rice, sofrito, and chicken are thoroughly incorporated. Add the peas, cook for a minute, then start squirting in the ketchup. This is the most gratifying moment for ketchup lovers like me. Squirt it in to your taste, but it shouldn't be so wet that you just get a mouthful of ketchup. It should look like red fried rice, with a touch of moisture from the ketchup. Remove from the heat and season with salt and pepper to taste.
- 3 Fill a small bowl with rice and pack it down. Upend the bowl onto a plate to create a molehill of rice in the center of the plate. Repeat for each serving. **(CONTINUED)**

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- 4 In a small bowl, whip 2 eggs until frothy.
- 5 Heat a medium nonstick skillet over medium-high heat until a drop of egg sizzles in the pan. Spray the pan with vegetable spray and pour in the beaten eggs. Rock the pan gently so that the eggs coat the bottom of the pan. The eggs should cook quite quickly. Lift a corner with a spatula to allow the uncooked egg that has pooled on top to run into the exposed area. You're aiming for a sheet of fluffy cooked egg with a little bit of undercooked egg remaining on top.
- 6 Slide the omelet over the mound of rice. If you've done this perfectly, you now have a "handkerchief" of egg on top of the rice. To gild the lily, tuck the edges of the omelet under the rice to create a neat package. Squeeze ketchup all over the omelet and plate.
- 7 Repeat the whole process for the other plates. If you're living in a Japanese household like mine, everyone starts eating as soon as their dish lands in front of them. This would have driven my father insane, which makes it all the better.