


*cravings*

INDULGING  
 CRAVING  
 TASTING  
 SIPPING  
 HAPPENING  
 LISTENING  
 FRIDAYS  
 EVENTS


Savoring  
**FOOD BLOGS**



ABOUT CONTACT NEWSLETTER RSS/ATOM ADVERTISING STORE

SPECIAL FEATURE

## cool tropical fruit



COCONUT BONANZA

Coconut Goody Bag  
 Coconut Foods  
 Fresh Coconut Milk

Search

History:

- A Brazilian Affair
- Coconut Bonanza
- Chiang Mai '08
- Crazy for Coffee
- Nourishment for the Soul
- Washington, D. C. '08
- Food in Asia But Not Asian Food
- 2007 Holidays
- Holiday Gifts '07
- Chicago '07
- Italian Food Lover
- Washington, D. C. '07
- Greek Summer
- A Cheese in a Day of a Life
- Honolulu '07
- Design & Gastronomy
- Jonathan of Joe
- Alto
- I Heart Oinkers
- 2006 Favorites
- Holiday Gifts
- Turkish Delight
- Ethnic Eats
- Food Blogs
- Shanghai '06

---

June 2008

[website](#) • [tell-a-friend](#) • [print](#) • [comment](#)


### Coconut Bonanza

by Celia Cheng


While researching coconut foods, I was invited by Amy Besa, co-owner of Filipino restaurant, Cendrillon, to learn how to make fresh-squeezed coconut milk.

Sous chef Perry Mamanil, the "coconut expert," walked me through the entire process and then showed me how to make *suman* (steamed rice cake) with the milk.


Coconuts are available at the West Indian grocery stores in Brooklyn. Here we see mature coconuts. Perry uses a knife to shave off the hair.




He then uses the back of the knife to strike hard the center of each coconut, until it breaks into halves. Once opened, the juice is drained.




And the coconut halves are washed with water.



Then he sits on the "horse," which is the grater — a stool with a blade with serrated edges attached. Quite phallic!



And very skillfully, he grates the coconuts by circling the coconut halves over the blade in quick, smooth motions to produce shreds of coconut meat.



- COCONUT BONANZA
- Coconut Goody Bag  
 Coconut Foods  
 Fresh Coconut Milk
- Search
- History:
- A Brazilian Affair
  - Coconut Bonanza
  - Chiang Mai '08
  - Crazy for Coffee
  - Nourishment for the Soul
  - Washington, D. C. '08
  - Food in Asia But Not Asian Food
  - 2007 Holidays
  - Holiday Gifts '07
  - Chicago '07
  - Italian Food Lover
  - Washington, D. C. '07
  - Greek Summer
  - A Cheese in a Day of a Life
  - Honolulu '07
  - Design & Gastronomy
  - Jonathan of Joe
  - Alto
  - I Heart Oinkers
  - 2006 Favorites
  - Holiday Gifts
  - Turkish Delight
  - Ethnic Eats
  - Food Blogs
  - Shanghai '06
- 
- 1st Anniversary
  - Paris '06
  - Hakone-Ita '06
  - Shida
  - Xi Yan
  - Rome '05
  - Tom Colicchio
  - France
  - San Francisco '05
  - Summer Vegetables
  - Chocolatiers
  - Coconut Foods
  - Book Review
  - Things I Have Learned in My Life So Far
  - Cookbooks
  - Italian Food Lover
  - Destinations
  - Athens
  - Taipei
  - Washington, D. C.
  - Hakone-Ita
  - Hong Kong
  - Shanghai
  - Intanbul
  - Florianópolis
  - Honolulu
  - Chi-ago
  - Chiang Mai
  - Paris
  - Rome
  - San Francisco
  - Washington, D. C. - U Street Area
  - Chef:
  - AkMdar Mawab
  - Collin Alevras
  - Bannon Wise
  - Dan Barber
  - Ed WSB
  - Gabrielle Hamilton
  - Harold Moore
  - Harrison Mosher
  - Hene Rosen
  - Jimmy Bradley
  - John Schaefer
  - Jon Snyder
  - Hurt Gutenbrunner
  - Marco Canera
  - Peter Hoffman
  - Rebecca Charles
  - Shida Tao
  - Shida Ohtsuz
  - Tom Colicchio
  - Chocolatiers:
  - 7-3 Chocolates
  - Chocolat Moderne
  - Chocolato Bar
  - Christophe Hermen
  - Beauroe & Galbis
  - Faschen
  - Kee's Chocolates
  - La Maison du Chocolat
  - Mariotelle
  - Martine Y
  - Ortrud Hunkl Carstens
  - Pierre Marcellin
  - Richard
  - Voyages
  - Restaurants:
  - Wolcraft
  - Altoes
  - Blue Hill
  - Castler's
  - City Bakery
  - Craft
  - Gramercy Tavern
  - Green Zebra
  - Hearth
  - Il Buce
  - Il Laboratorio del Gelato
  - Primo
  - Julia's Empanadas



Here's the resulting pan of the snowlike shreds of four coconuts.



Squeezing the coconut shreds naturally produces milk (high in oil and sugar content). To create a greater volume of milk, Perry boiled water and poured it over the shreds, letting it soak for a couple of minutes before squeezing again.



And here you have freshly squeezed, incredibly fragrant coconut milk.



Demonstrating a dish that uses coconut milk, he made a special *suman* (steamed rice cake) with purple *diket* (glutinous) rice from the rice terraces of the Philippines. The rice is heirloom (grain passed down from one generation to another) and is grown organically and purchased at fair trade prices.



The heirloom rice is first soaked. It can be soaked overnight, but we only soaked it for about half an hour, so it would be al dente when steamed.



Perry first heated the fresh-squeezed coconut milk in a large wok, and then added the drained heirloom rice. He cooks until the coconut milk is completely absorbed and evaporated. The only other ingredient is coarse sea salt from the Philippines.

Koani  
Pearl Oyster Bar  
Alfa  
Savoy  
Sepia  
The Red Cat  
The Tasting Room  
Tsur  
Gifts  
Holiday Gifts '07  
Holiday Gifts '06  
Q&A  
Isacopo Fabal  
Megan Wren  
Jonathan Robinson  
Louise FIR  
Max McCalman



The cooked rice is then wrapped in banana leaves and steamed.



The suman is served with a sauce made from cooked coconut shreds and palm sugar. An absolute delight!

