

Lola Flor's BIBINGKA

SERVES 12

These soft, spongy rice cakes are traditionally eaten around Christmas time, but are also a yummy snack enjoyed year-round. To get the most authentic flavor, similar to what you'd get from a street vendor in the Philippines, you'd want to grill this over charcoal. That's what Lola Flor does, but she's hard core. For us lesser mortals, the oven works just fine. The banana leaves that line the molds are optional but HIGHLY recommended because the flavor they impart in these rice cakes are incomparable.

Ingredients:

- 2 tbsp butter, melted
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- ¾ cup (6 fl oz) coconut milk
- ¼ cup (2 fl oz) whole or evaporated milk
- 1-½ cups rice flour (NOT glutinous rice flour)
- 1 tsp baking powder
- ¼ tsp salt
- Banana leaves, cut to fit your molds (optional)

Toppings: (Optional)

- 1-2 salted duck eggs, thinly sliced
- Unsweetened coconut, shredded
- Cheddar cheese or Velveeta, grated
- Butter, melted
- Granulated sugar



BLACKMAIL AND BIBINGKA by Mia P. Manansala

Directions:

1. Preheat the oven to 400°F.
2. Clean the banana leaves under running water, making sure not to rip them. If your banana leaves are tough, pass them briefly over an open flame on your stove or microwave them in 30-second intervals. Once the leaves are soft and pliable, line a 12-cup cupcake/muffin or brioche mold with the banana leaves. You can also make it in one 8-inch round pan, but you may need to adjust the cooking time. Use scissors to cut off the excess banana leaves around the edge since they burn easily.
3. In a large bowl, mix the melted butter and sugar until combined.
4. Add the coconut milk and whole milk to the bowl and whisk until combined.
5. Sift the rice flour, baking powder, and salt into the wet ingredients. Whisk together the ingredients until there are no lumps.
6. Pour $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of batter into each mold. And top with one to two slices of duck egg, if using.
7. Put the molds on a sheet pan to help stabilize the bibingka. Put the molds and sheet pan into the oven.
8. After 10 minutes, rotate the pans 180° to promote even baking. Sprinkle with coconut, if using, and return the pans to the oven.
9. Bake for another 10-15 minutes. Check for doneness by pushing a chopstick or thin knife into the center of the bibingka. If it comes out clean, it's done.
10. Brush the tops of the bibingka with melted butter and sprinkle with sugar and grated cheese, if desired. Let cool slightly and enjoy warm or room temperature.