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The Chinese Herbal Cookbook by Penelope Ody

Oat Porridge with Cinnamon and *Gou Qi Zi*

Oats are a wonderfully stimulating food for the nervous system, energising and acting as an anti-depressant to clear away winter blues. They are a rich source of B vitamins, and help to lower cholesterol levels and to regulate blood sugar. Oats contain iron and iodine and, combined with *Gou Qi Zi* (lycii berries) help to nourish blood.

Gou Qi Zi and *Rou Gui* are also warming and stimulating, making this an ideal breakfast for autumn or winter mornings or an evening pudding dish — excellent for the old or weak or during recovery from long illness. Sunflower and sesame seeds together lubricate the large intestine and are good for a sluggish digestion.

Serves 4

Butter, for greasing
225 g/8oz medium oatmeal or porridge oats
570 ml/1 pint soya or cow's milk
1 tablespoon maple syrup
25g/1 oz *Gou Qi Zi*
½ teaspoon *Rou Gui*
55g/2oz sunflower seeds
25g/1 oz black sesame seeds
Pinch of salt

Preheat the oven to 190°C/375°F/gas mark 5. Generously grease a glass or ceramic ovenproof dish with butter

Put the oatmeal or porridge oats, milk, maple syrup, *Gou Qi Zi*, *Rou Gui*, sunflower seeds, sesame seeds and salt into the dish. Mix well and bake in the oven for 30 minutes. Check the porridge and stir after 15 minutes, adding a little more hot water or milk if it is sticking or becoming too thick and solid.

Serve with crème fraiche or cream for pudding or warm milk for breakfast.