

## RED RICE COOKED BY A CHEF

One day I was invited for a lunch at the residence of the Royal Danish Ambassador somewhere in Kebayoran Baru, Jakarta, following a signing of a huge amount of grant generously provided by the Danish to a national NGO I have been working with. To my surprise, the main course was ... red rice! I guess my amazed face was noted by the Ambassador who sat on my right. 'Do you expect white rice?' he politely questioned me. 'No. in fact, I am very pleased your Chef cooked red rice. It is even much, much better than the white rice. Feels like home', I said. And it tasted grrreat! The Chef surely excelled in red rice cooking.

Really, I feel happy that red rice has been served as a prestigious dish in the Danish Embassy. I definitely some time want to cook my red rice just like that. The red rice was mixed with small pieces of beet, nuts (my guess was pine nuts), and tiny chops of aromatic leaves (celery, chives or coriander, ... I cannot recognized it). Some seasonings (I can't tell what they were) were also added, and ... viola... we got a yummy-yummy delicious red rice.

A few days after the lunch with Danish Ambassador, I had a workshop in Inna Hotel, Yogyakarta, located in the heart of the city, at the corner of the busy Malioboro Street. I got another pleasant surprise there. Inna Hotel Yogyakarta also served red rice for breakfast and dinner!

People many times complain that red rice is not delicious. Red rice is not sticky. Red rice is difficult to swallow. To some extent, the mouth-to-mouth word is true. But, there is good news. The yummy, sticky, nutritious, easy-to-swallow rice is actually existed. We just need to know where to find and buy it.

Unfortunately, we still have sad news. Not many farmers are willing to plant the red rice, simply because the red rice is difficult to sell in the market. Red rice takes longer to harvest than the white rice, maybe 6 month or even more than that for some local varieties.