

THE JAPANESE LARDER

Bringing Japanese Ingredients
Into Your Everyday Cooking

LUIZ HARA

Food Photography by Simon Smith
Location Photography by Ricardo Hara







THE JAPANESE LARDER





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THE JAPANESE LARDER

Bringing Japanese Ingredients
Into Your Everyday Cooking

LUIZ HARA

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DEDICATION
To Gerald Coakley
Partner, friend, supporter.

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INTRODUCTION

The Japanese Larder aims to demystify core Japanese ingredients and encourage cooks to experiment with them in their everyday cooking, just as we did with so many other delicious and unfamiliar foods over recent decades.

For example, take the humble garlic – today an everyday ingredient, but once unused and unloved in many Western countries. It was pioneering food writers such as Elizabeth David in the UK and Julia Child in the USA, who opened the eyes and taste buds of their readers in the 1950s. And in most English-speaking countries, whoever cooked with radicchio, pancetta or even balsamic vinegar 30 years ago? It was only through the work of some visionary chefs that these ingredients are in our larders and refrigerators today.

How often have we bought an exotic foreign ingredient for that special recipe only to struggle to think what to do with it beyond cooking that dish, and for it to be sitting in our fridges until it is past its use by date? I think we can all relate to this.

Japanese ingredients all too often baffle home cooks – we don't know how to use them except in the recipe at hand. For example, miso paste is the key ingredient in the ubiquitous miso soup, but there is so much more to miso than that. Miso can be used in many different ways to create anything from marinated grilled (broiled) cod to barbecued caramelized pork ribs, and even miso ice cream. Miso is a wondrous fermented ingredient that comes in different colours and textures, and adds a lot of richness and umami to anything it is used with. Miso is now widely available, but how can we make the most of it?

With that in mind, *The Japanese Larder* is a celebration of Japanese ingredients, aiming to explore their potential uses in an everyday home setting. To date, most Japanese cookbooks focus on home cooking, sushi or the haute cuisine style known as 'kaiseki'. *The Japanese Larder* is not a Japanese



cookbook, but rather introduces and utilizes Japanese ingredients in easily achievable, traditional and novel recipes for the home cook.

Chris Han

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Each chapter of *The Japanese Larder* concentrates on a set of core Japanese ingredients and their uses in classical Japanese cooking, followed by new recipes created for kitchens beyond Japan. You can use these recipes to create an entire meal, or use one of these dishes alongside some of your own favourites – there are no set rules.

Starting with a set of **seven core Japanese seasonings**, the first chapter investigates why Japanese food is so flavoursome, and how you can achieve the fifth flavour, umami, in your kitchen with just a handful of ingredients.

This is followed by a chapter on **dried, fermented and preserved Japanese ingredients** that highlights the usefulness of these concentrated foods to bring out complex flavours in your home-cooked dishes.

A third chapter focuses on less familiar **Japanese spices, condiments and garnishes**, and is an opportunity to bring in new, perhaps undiscovered ingredients into your cooking repertoire.

There is an entire chapter on **Japanese rice, noodle and tofu dishes**, including recipes on how to make your own noodles, soya milk and tofu from scratch, should you not have access to good shop-bought alternatives, as well as exploring the uses of these ingredients in traditional and modern recipes.

Japanese fruit and vegetables are the focus of the next chapter, and here we consider many native ingredients readily available outside Japan, in a number of savoury and dessert recipes.

In the sixth chapter, we consider **Japanese teas and other beverages**, including sake, shochu and whisky, and how we can utilize them in some novel desserts and drinks, including ice cream, puddings and easy-to-make cocktails.

Lastly, a chapter on **saucers, marinades and garnishes**, including traditional and modern recipes created using a number of core Japanese ingredients. These sauces, marinades and garnishes can be used not only in traditional Japanese dishes, but also in your own home creations from recipes in this book and beyond.

I have also included a number of 'How To Make' recipes, which show how to create some important foodstuffs from scratch, including ramen and udon noodles, dashi and tofu, should you wish you to make your own or not have access to good-quality shop-bought alternatives.

All the recipes are made from produce that is readily available in major supermarkets, encouraging cooks the world over to try something new and to expand their cooking repertoire. Plus no specialist equipment or complex techniques are required for the recipes in *The Japanese Larder*, making them easily achievable at home.

WHAT'S FOR DINNER TONIGHT?

So, what is for dinner tonight – roast duck breasts in clementine teriyaki glaze or grilled lamb cutlets in spicy green miso? Or for a meatless all-in-one meal, why not try the brown butter and miso linguine?

Whatever your preferences, I hope you will find a few recipes in *The Japanese Larder* to pique your curiosity for Japanese ingredients and bring them into your everyday cooking at home.



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人気ナンバーワン

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わさびのりをまろやかに、大人の味!!
冷奴、納豆、めん、冷やし中華、おにぎり、お弁当に最適!!

うつけくらげ
うつけん、お酒の肴に!!

ふかひれ風くらげ
キラキラの玉ねぎと甘めにケチマシラシマシラ

数の子松前漬
数の子が大きシリ!! 上品な味!!

つぶジャン辛
夏に最高のわつまみ!!





JAPANESE KEY SEASONINGS





JAPANESE KEY SEASONINGS

WHAT ARE THE JAPANESE KEY SEASONINGS?

Japanese cooks use seven key ingredients to season their food. These are soy sauce, miso, dashi broth made from konbu (kelp) and katsuobushi (dried bonito fish), sake, mirin and rice vinegar.

In traditional and modern Japanese recipes, you will find at least one, but usually a combination of some (if not all) of these, in different proportions. They are called for in every recipe to achieve the four basic flavours of salt, sweet, bitter and sour, as well as the fifth flavour, umami.

In this chapter, we will explore the use of these seven key Japanese seasonings, in both traditional and newly created recipes ideal for the home cook. You will also see the same seven ingredients appearing in subsequent chapters throughout the book, such is their importance.

To get the most out of this book, it will be well worth your while to visit your nearest Japanese or Asian grocery, or search online for these ingredients. It is a little investment of your time and money but will set you up to explore the vast majority of the recipes in this book, as well as many other traditional Japanese recipes from other sources.

Japanese cuisine as we know it today was developed during the almost 300 years before the 1868 Meiji Restoration, when the country was closed

A: TAMARI SOY SAUCE	I: BARLEY MISO
B: SAKE	J: BROWN RICE MISO
C: MIRIN	K: WHITE MISO
D: RICE VINEGAR	L and M: INSTANT DASHI
E: DASHI INFUSION BAG	POWDER
F: KATSUOBUSHI BLOCK	N: KATSUOBUSHI FLAKES
G: DARK SOY SAUCE	O: KONBU
H: LIGHT SOY SAUCE	P: KONBU

to the outside world. Meat or animal fat consumption was banned and sugar was a rarity at the time, so Japanese cooks had to be crafty to create rich flavour profiles in their cooking. They made use of seasonal ingredients found at their very peak, as well as utilizing fermentation and drying processes and ingredients rich in complex amino acids such as glutamate, inosinate and guanylate, to extract the fifth basic flavour – umami.

WHY IS JAPANESE FOOD SO FLAVOURSOME?

The answer to this is simple – umami.

But what is umami? Umami, the fifth flavour, has been at the core of Japanese cooking for hundreds of years, but was first scientifically identified in konbu as the amino acid glutamate by Japanese scientist Kikunae Ikeda in 1908.

Subsequently, two other umami complex amino acids, inosinate and guanylate, found in dried bonito fish and shiitake mushrooms respectively, were identified by other Japanese scientists.

But umami is not limited to Japanese ingredients, as was at first thought after these breakthroughs: glutamate-rich ingredients also include vegetables such as tomatoes and onions, cheese, fish, seafood and dry-cured ham.

Long before these discoveries, these ingredients were used for centuries by cooks the world over to extract the rich flavour that today we know as umami. Umami cannot be created by any combination of the other four basic flavours. It is a flavour in its own right, and is experienced when tongue receptors are stimulated by these complex amino acids, and this taste information is relayed to the brain. A rich French veal stock, aged Parmesan cheese or Japanese dashi broth are all umami-rich foods.

The extraction of umami is at the core of Japanese cooking. Everything that a Japanese cook will do, from the choice of ingredients to the cooking processes, is aimed at achieving umami. Largely an unconscious practice, it is so engrained in the cook's mind as to be almost part of the national psyche, an activity that has been perfected over many centuries.

In order for you to achieve umami flavour in your everyday cooking, apart from using ingredients that are seasonal and rich in the complex amino acids described above, the other important aspect is to use Japanese seasonings that have been fermented, dried or smoked. These processes highly concentrate the amino acids and hence flavours that are at the heart of the umami taste experience.

FERMENTATION, DRYING AND SMOKING

Fermentation is the buzzword in cooking these days, but it has been used in Japan for millennia to make soy sauce, miso, mirin, rice vinegar and sake, and to extract umami.

Fermentation makes use of good bacteria, mould and yeast. Each of these will ferment foods for a particular purpose. For example, mould will break down protein and starch into complex amino acids and sugars to develop umami, while yeast is used to convert sugar into carbon dioxide to leaven bread, and to create alcohol in sake making.

Fermentation, in addition to bringing out umami, helps to preserve foods and increase their digestibility and nutritional value. While fermentation's importance in preservation has declined in the era of refrigeration, its use in adding nutritional value and flavour are on the increase.

Of the seven key Japanese seasonings, no fewer than five are fermented (soy sauce, mirin, sake, miso and rice vinegar), with the other two being dried and smoked (dried bonito fish and konbu). This means that you have a head start in your cooking as these ingredients are already highly concentrated in flavour. From a practical point of view, given today's busy lifestyles, another key advantage of these ingredients is that the hard work has already been done for you, saving you precious cooking time.

A classic example of this is seen when comparing a Japanese dashi broth to a French stock. The two key dried Japanese ingredients, dried bonito fish and konbu, are used to make the dashi broth on page 20, one of the key Japanese seasonings. It will take you around 20 minutes to achieve a highly

flavourful, umami-rich Japanese broth using these ingredients. A classic French stock, however, where bones are roasted then simmered with a blend of vegetables and water, will take many hours to achieve a similar result.

Soy sauce and miso are the leading fermented seasonings in Japan – with a fermentation process that takes from three months to three years to complete, they are well-matured and ready to use in food preparation. As with dried bonito fish and konbu in the making of dashi stock, extracting umami from soy sauce and miso takes very little time.

Soy Sauce

The leading fermented seasoning in Japanese cooking, soy sauce is made from soybeans, wheat and salt. As a fermented seasoning, soy sauce adds salt and great umami to any dish it is used with.

Soy sauce is produced in most Asian countries, including China and Korea, and each one will have its own distinctive flavour perfect for their particular cuisine. Japanese soy sauces differ from other types, as they are generally sweeter and lighter in style, making them ideal for Japanese cuisine and the recipes in this book.

There are different types of Japanese soy sauce – the one called for in this book, unless otherwise specified, is koikuchi or dark soy sauce. This is the most widely used soy sauce in Japan; with a 16 per cent salt content. It is made from equal amounts of soybeans and wheat, hence the relative sweetness, as wheat starch is turned into sugar during fermentation.

Koikuchi dark soy sauce is one of the main ingredients used to make the ubiquitous Teriyaki Sauce and its variations (see page 248). It is also one of the key seasonings in the classic Japanese recipe for Buta No Kakuni or Pork Belly Squares in Cider, Soy Sauce and Brown Sugar (see page 56).

Japanese soy sauce also combines well with other non-Japanese ingredients, adding depth of flavour and richness to dishes, as in the Maple-Soy Cured Salmon (see page 24) or the Mackerel in Soy and Balsamic Glaze (see page 32).



Tamari soy sauce, light soy sauce (usukuchi) and dark soy sauce (koikuchi).

The other type of Japanese soy sauce that I often use is usukuchi or light soy sauce. The lightness refers only to the colour, because it has a higher salt content than its dark cousin, at 18–19 per cent. It is mainly used in the Kansai area around Kyoto, for dishes where a lighter colour of the finished dish is required. I make use of usukuchi light soy sauce in my citrus-based Ponzu Sauce and its variations (see page 248), for the Edamame Gohan (see page 152) and in My Kyoto Garden recipe (see page 202).

Tamari soy sauce is made with 10 per cent wheat and 90 per cent soybean, although there are types with zero wheat. It is strongly flavoured, viscous and used as a dipping sauce as well as for cooking. This is commonly used by people trying to reduce their gluten intake. For a low-gluten alternative, tamari soy sauce can be used in any recipes in this book calling for soy sauce.

The two other types of Japanese soy sauce are saishikomi (re-fermented) and shiro shoyu (white soy sauce). Saishikomi or re-fermented aged soy sauce has a strong flavour, colour and aroma, and because of its richness is primarily used for dipping sashimi and sushi. Shiro shoyu, or white soy sauce, is made mainly from wheat. It is extra light in colour

but has a high salt content, with a faint sweetness and distinctive aroma. It is great for seasoning foods without changing their colour.

When cooking, soy sauce should be added in stages, not all at the beginning of the cooking process. This is particularly important for dishes where the cooking broth will be reduced and you risk making them too salty. I often add soy sauce in stages, saving a little as a finishing touch to a dish.

Miso

Another major fermented Japanese seasoning is miso. Made from soybeans, miso is classified in three main ways. First by the type of mould culture used for its fermentation (rice, soybean and barley), then by its colour (from white to red and dark brown), and finally by its salt content (from sweet to very salty). There are thousands of miso varieties across Japan, representing a spectrum of combinations as well as regional variation in ingredients.

Rice miso (kome miso) accounts for about 80 per cent of miso consumed in Japan and comes in sweet, semi-sweet or salty varieties. The leading type of light-coloured, salty miso is called shinshu from Nagano prefecture. Light-brown, salty rice miso is the main type I use in this book, be it shinshu or other brown miso from elsewhere in Japan. Some of the recipes calling for it include the classic Japanese Tonjiru or Hearty Miso Soup (see page 84), and other modern recipes such as the Brown Butter and Miso Linguine (see page 58) and Sirloin Steak in Miso, Tobanjan Chilli and Garlic Sauce (see page 50).

Barley miso (mugi miso) is made with barley koji and can be either sweet or salty. It is called inaka or country miso, and is made mainly in the southern areas of Japan. Barley miso's rich and wholesome flavour is ideal for traditional soups or as a seasoning for vegetables and meat as in the recipe for Slow-Braised Pork Belly in Barley Miso (see page 54).



HONDA MISO, KYOTO

Founded in 1830 to produce miso exclusively for the Imperial Palace, Honda Miso were the creators of the mild sweet white miso known as saikyo. A stone's throw from the Kyoto Imperial Park, I met company President Shigetoshi Honda who welcomed me to his flagship store. He explained 'as the nobility of the time did little manual work they favoured a lower-salt seasoning. Saikyo miso, with a higher proportion of rice to soybean, was their miso of choice.'

In addition to saikyo, Honda Miso also makes other types of miso including red miso (with higher soybean content) and yuzu miso (flavoured with the rind of the Japanese citrus). Honda Miso represents the best of artisan miso production in Japan.

As Mr Honda put it: 'Miso, which originated in China, evolved into a Japanese-specific food that has become world-renowned. I hope that miso will eventually be used in food the world over.' I could not agree more!



The other type of miso is soybean (mame miso), and you may want to experiment with it as you become more familiar with the other miso varieties covered in this book. Soybean miso is made from soybean and salt only; the main type is hatcho. The colour is dark red (brown) and it has an intense salty flavour, slight astringency and sharpness.

Awase or mixed miso is made by mixing multiple types of miso or combining different kinds of koji (see below). This is a middle-ground miso, neither sweet nor too salty, and works well with the savoury recipes in this book too as a light-coloured brown miso.

Miso can also be classified depending on its colour or salt content. Whether white, light or red (actually brown), miso's colour is determined by the length of its fermentation and aging – the longer the fermentation period, the darker its colour. Miso contains a live mould culture and it continues to age, so the colour will darken over time even after you bring it home. To retain the health benefits of this live mould culture, miso should never be boiled as this would kill the good bacteria.

Miso can be sweet, semi-sweet or salty. Generally speaking, the more mould culture (koji) is used in the fermentation process, the sweeter the miso will be. For example, the rice miso from Kyoto region known as saikyo, has a high rice mould content of about 25 per cent, and is very white and sweet. Saikyo miso is ideal for desserts and sauces as in the traditional Japanese sauce called Karashi-Su-Miso used in my grilled (broiled) lobster dish (see page 38) and the Miso and Satsuma Marinated Salmon (see page 26).

Dashi – Konbu (Kelp) and Katsuobushi (Dried Bonito Fish)

As a source of umami flavour, dashi is at the very core of Japanese cooking, with a recorded history of over 500 years of use. Dashi, or Japanese stock, is much more than just the base for a soup, jus or gravy as beef, chicken or fish stock might be in European cooking. It is used widely as a vehicle for umami flavour, in everything from miso soup to dressings, or even for cooking vegetables.

There are different types of dashi, but for the purposes of this book, the main type of dashi used in most recipes is Primary Dashi (or ichiban dashi) (see page 20).

Primary Dashi is a simple stock containing only two key Japanese ingredients – konbu and dried bonito fish (katsuobushi). So it is worth your while purchasing good-quality ingredients to prepare it. In Japan, there are at least 40 varieties of konbu, depending on their region of origin, including rishiri, rausu, hidaka and makombu. Japanese chefs will devote great attention to the source of their konbu, as each will impart a different flavour and hence determine the character of the regional cuisine. However, more than 90 per cent of all konbu in Japan comes from the Northern island of Hokkaido, where it is harvested then sun-dried from July to September.

Used since the 3rd century AD in Japanese cooking, the production of dried bonito fish is a laborious one, involving a long process that takes about 120 days, with the end product being a mere sixth of its starting weight. The various steps include cooking at low temperature, smoking a number of times, the application of special mould species, maturation and sun-drying. As with any ingredient, there are different quality grades – determined by whether the fish has gone through mould treatment or not – from arabushi to karebushi and Honkarebushi, the highest-quality dried bonito fish.

Dried konbu is rich in glutamate, the main component of umami flavour, while dried bonito fish has a high content of inosinate, which potentiates the effect of glutamate on the palate. This is surely a marriage made in heaven.

There are a number of ways to prepare dashi stock. Michelin-starred restaurants in Japan will use top-quality, sun-dried konbu and whole dried bonito fish fillets which they will shave just before preparing the broth. This will make the clearest and finest dashi, but is not a practical option for most home cooks, even those in Japan.

Whenever possible, I recommend making primary dashi from scratch using dried konbu and bonito fish, which is sold ready shaved ultra-thin (kezuribushi – katsuobushi flakes) as described in my Primary Dashi recipe (see page 20).

There are other shortcuts though, and if you want to go down that road, I recommend purchasing good-quality dashi infusion bags, available in Japanese grocery stores. The bags are filled with both dried bonito fish and konbu and sometimes may also include dried shiitake mushrooms and other types of dried fish such as sardines or anchovies. Dashi infusion bags are very easy to use, just drop the bags into hot water (not boiling), and let them infuse. Follow the instructions on the packet for quantities and timings.

The next option, and the least desirable one, would be using instant dashi powder. This is as similar to proper dashi as stock cubes are to an authentic broth made from beef bones and vegetables. A popular brand is Ajinomoto, but it contains monosodium glutamate (MSG). The great majority of home cooks in Japan use it for a rushed

Dashi infusion bags – the most practical way to make good-quality dashi stock.



mid-week meal, so do not feel you are cheating by doing so. I use it too, but for very limited recipes. I find it acceptable when I want to enrich the flavour of a sauce in which dashi is a minor component or in recipes with a number of strongly flavoured seasonings where the subtlety of primary dashi would be overpowered as in Buta No Kakuni or Pork Belly Squares in Cider, Soy Sauce and Brown Sugar (see page 56). For a clear, highly flavoursome Japanese broth used for dishes such as the classic Japanese recipe for Oyakodon or Poached Chicken and Egg in Dashi and Soy Broth (see page 40) or the modern recipe for Chilled Green Tea Soba Noodles with a Red Onion and Coriander (Cilantro) Fritter in a Cold Dashi Broth (see page 170), you will need to make Primary Dashi (see page 20) for best results.

Mirin

Mirin is sweetened sake used solely for cooking, and is another key Japanese fermented seasoning. Mirin is made when rice mould culture (known as rice koji) breaks down the starch in Japanese glutinous rice (mochigome).

With alcohol and sugar contents of around 14 and 45 per cent respectively, mirin brings out sweetness, depth of flavour and glossiness in sauces and broths when used as seasoning for savoury dishes in Japanese or any other cuisine.

The depth of flavour from mirin is due to its main sweet component glucose, the Maillard reaction (see below), when mirin is heated, and the presence of glutamic acid.

Unlike sugar whose sweet component is sucrose, Mirin has glucose but with a complex sweetness incorporating maltose, glycol and other sugars. When mirin is heated, the Maillard reaction is triggered with glucose giving rise to a toasty aroma, which does not happen with plain sugar (sucrose).

The Maillard reaction is a chemical interaction between amino acids and reducing sugars such as glucose that gives browned food its distinctive flavour. For example, the browning of steaks when seared or grilled (broiled), the umami taste in fried onions and

the darkened crust of baked goods such as pretzels and toast. The process creates hundreds of different flavour compounds that are distinctive to each type of food in which it occurs.

In addition to the advantages of glucose and the Maillard reaction, mirin has a complex taste resulting from the presence of glutamic acid, a major source of umami. When mirin is mixed with amino acid rich soy sauce and then heated, the Maillard reaction occurs more effectively, so they are often used together. Mirin also balances the saltiness of soy sauce in dishes with its gentle sweetness. Sugar can be used instead to bring balanced sweetness to dishes, but for the reasons discussed above, it will not bring out the toasty aroma and depth of flavour that mirin would.

A similar and less expensive product is mirin-fu or mirin-like seasoning. Mirin-fu has a lower than 1 per cent alcohol content but does not impart all the true benefits of plain mirin. This option can be used for people who want little or no alcohol in their food preparation.

I call for mirin in nearly every recipe in this book in which soy sauce is used, including Teriyaki Sauce and its variations (see page 248), as well as for Gomadare or Classic Sesame Dressing (see page 250), used in the Blackened Cauliflower with Japanese Toasted Sesame Sauce (see page 90).

Sake

Like soy sauce, miso or dashi, sake is an indispensable key seasoning in Japanese cooking. Only four ingredients are used to make sake – water, rice, koji mould and yeast – therefore the type and quality of these ingredients are paramount. Sake making is a highly skilled and laborious process, an activity that has been perfected over millennia in Japan.

I will go into a little more detail about the different types of drinking sake in Chapter 6, but here I discuss the role of sake in cooking and the ideal types of sake used for this purpose.

Why are sake and its sweeter cousin, mirin, used so much in Japanese cooking? While wine and to some extent beer are used in Western cooking, they are not nearly as ubiquitous.



Sake, mirin and rice vinegar – important fermented ingredients in Japanese cooking.

Sake and mirin are used for three main reasons. Firstly, and perhaps the most obvious reason, is to add the distinctive flavour of these ingredients to the food, such as sweetness, which also helps to balance out the saltiness of soy sauce or miso.

The second reason is to counteract the strong gamey odour (known as kusami in Japanese) in animal protein such as meat and fish. Carbonyl compounds and organic acids found in sake react with the amines responsible for these strong odours, making them evaporate along with the alcohol if they are heated together.

The third and most important reason is that sake contains both umami-yielding complex amino acids – glutamate and inosinate – which are produced when the enzymes in the koji break down the protein in the rice during the sake making process. So when sake is added to food, it heightens the umaminess in the whole dish, making it taste even better.



FUKUSHIMA KATSUO, KYOTO

At Fukushima Katsuo in Nantan City, near Kyoto, I met Kazuhiro Mukuda, the company's International Business Director, to talk katsuobushi, the secret of a superlative dashi and umami.

Katsuobushi or bonito fish flakes are well known as one of the holy trinity of dashi stock ingredients (konbu and water being the other two). At Fukushima Katsuo, I had the opportunity to participate in a tasting of dashi stocks prepared by Mukuda himself. To my surprise I was presented with a range of different small dried fish (niboshi), flakes from sardines, herring, mackerel, amberstripe, seabream and flying fish and a number of what looked like tea bags! What an eye opener this was, a humbling experience that really got me thinking.

Mukuda explained: 'Ninety nine per cent of all katsuobushi fish flakes consumed in Japan are used by the restaurant trade. Discerning home cooks are now using dashi infusion bags. These contain a mixture of bonito fish flakes, konbu and other ingredients such as baby dried fish, dried shiitake mushrooms and seaweed. They are completely MSG-free and take no time at all to prepare; dashi infusion bags make superior dashi stock brimming with umami.'

Given the choice and availability of supply, where top-quality dashi is what you need, do look out for these magical dashi infusion bags – they are a real game changer!

You might think that like wine, the more expensive a sake is, the better it will be for cooking, but this is not the case. Higher-grade sake is actually lower in those umami-enhancing compounds than less refined, cheaper sake. The best sake to use for cooking is therefore the lowest-grade one known as junmai-shu (pure rice sake), which contains the highest amounts of complex amino acids.

For cooking I like using an inexpensive brand of sake such as Ozeki or Gekkeikan, two of the most popular Japanese junmai-shu. You can also use cooking sake (ryori-shu). Japanese manufacturers of cooking sake are required by law to add two to three per cent of salt to their sake as well as some vinegar, which works as a preservative, in order to label it as cooking sake. This avoids hefty Japanese alcohol taxes that would otherwise be applied, making the ingredient less expensive while rendering it unpalatable for drinking.

As cooking sake contains salt and vinegar (20–30g/¾–1¼oz of salt to 1 litre/1¾ pints/4 cups) of sake, which is rather a lot, you will need to approach it with some caution.

Rice Vinegar

In Japan most vinegar is made from rice, and is produced by brewing sake from rice and adding acetic acid bacteria before the aging process. Rice vinegar has a gentler and less intrusive flavour than fruit-based vinegars such as white wine or cider.

Used to add gentle sourness and depth of flavour to foods, rice vinegar also has antibacterial properties, keeping foods from spoiling or oxidizing. It is the major component in sushi seasoning and works as a natural preservative for the rice.

Rice vinegar is widely used in this book, for example for Ponzu Sauce and its variations (see page 248) and in my recipe for Whole Deep-Fried Sea Bass in a Spicy, Sweet and Sour Japanese Dressing (see page 30).

HOW TO MAKE DASHI – THE JAPANESE STOCK

Fish-, vegetable- and meat-based Japanese stocks

At the heart of Japanese cooking, dashi is a great vehicle for umami, adding the fifth flavour to everything it is cooked with.

FISH-BASED DASHI

The most popular, everyday dashi used in Japan contains konbu and dried bonito fish flakes. For all recipes in this book asking for dashi stock, use this Primary Dashi recipe unless otherwise specified.

PRIMARY DASHI

MAKES ABOUT 1 LITRE (1¾ PINTS/4 CUPS)

Primary dashi has a subtle yet intense flavour. It should be crystal clear and is mainly used as a base for delicate clear soups and sauces accompanying fish, seafood, chicken and tofu.

30g (1¼oz) konbu
1.2 litres (2 pints/5 cups) cold water
30g (1¼oz/2 cups) dried bonito fish flakes

1. Gently wipe the konbu with a damp cloth. Fill a pan with the measured water, add the konbu and leave it to stand, covered, for 6–8 hours. Remove the lid and, on a low heat, bring the water to a near boil. If you are pressed for time, skip the soaking but simmer the water and konbu very gently (at about 65°C/149°F) for an hour so that the konbu has enough time to flavour the stock.
2. Remove the konbu just before the water boils as it will give off a strong smell and bitter flavour if boiled at this point. Press the fleshiest part of the konbu with your finger: if it is soft, sufficient flavour has been obtained. If still tough, return it to the pan for a few

more minutes. Keep the water from boiling by adding a little more cold water.

3. After removing the konbu, bring the stock to a full boil then immediately add the dried bonito flakes, removing the pan from the heat at once. Do not stir – allow the flakes to settle to the bottom of the pan for a few minutes, then skim any foam from the surface. Pass the dashi through a muslin-lined sieve (cheesecloth-lined strainer) without pressing it.

4. Reserve the bonito flakes and konbu to make Secondary Dashi (see opposite).

5. The dashi will keep in the fridge for a few days and in the freezer for up to 3 months.



SECONDARY DASHI

MAKES ABOUT 1 LITRE (1¾ PINTS/4 CUPS)

Secondary dashi is ideal for thick soups, noodle broths, or as a cooking stock for vegetables and meat. It is a great way of using up konbu and bonito fish flakes left over from Primary Dashi (see opposite).

bonito fish flakes and konbu reserved from Primary Dashi
(see opposite)

1.5 litres (2 pints 10fl oz/6⅓ cups) cold water

15g (½oz/1 cup) dried bonito fish flakes

1. Place the reserved bonito fish flakes and konbu from the Primary Dashi and the measured water in a pan. Place the pan over a high heat until it just reaches boiling point, then reduce the heat and gently simmer until the stock is reduced by at least a third, or up to half depending on the desired strength of flavour; this should take about 20 minutes.

2. Add the dried bonito flakes and immediately remove the pan from the heat. Do not stir – allow the flakes to settle to the bottom of the pan for a few minutes, then skim any foam from the surface. Pass the dashi through a muslin-lined sieve (cheesecloth-lined strainer) without pressing it. Discard the bonito flakes. The leftover konbu can be used to make Konbu No Tsukudani (see page 252).

3. The dashi will keep in the fridge for a few days and in the freezer for up to 3 months.



NIBOSH DASHI

MAKES ABOUT 1 LITRE (1¾ PINTS/4 CUPS)

This dashi is made from small sun-dried fish called niboshi. There are different types of niboshi, but the most popular are sardines, pilchards or anchovies. Niboshi vary considerably in size, but should be about 5cm (2 inches) long and their bodies should be whole, straight and well-formed. It is important to pluck off the heads and remove the stomach section of the dried fish before using them to avoid bitterness in the final dashi.

Niboshi Dashi is stronger in flavour than konbu-bonito stocks and makes an excellent base for more robust recipes such as thick and rich miso soups, as well as ramen and udon noodle dishes.

30g (1¼oz) dried small sardines (niboshi)

1.2 litres (2 pints/5 cups) cold water or cold Primary or Secondary Konbu Dashi (see page 22)

5g (⅓oz) konbu (if using water)

1. Pluck off and discard the fish heads, open up the fish stomachs and remove and discard the insides. Place the prepared fish in a pan with the measured water and konbu, or with the Primary or Secondary Konbu Dashi, and leave to soak for 30–60 minutes.

2. Bring the water quickly to a boil, skim off any scum that rises to the surface and simmer very gently for 6–8 minutes.

3. Remove from the heat and pass through a very fine muslin-lined sieve (cheesecloth-lined strainer).

4. The dashi will keep in the fridge for a few days and in the freezer for up to 3 months.

VEGETARIAN DASHI

The most popular vegetarian dashi stocks use umami-rich ingredients such as konbu and dried shiitake mushrooms, which deliver a flavourful, intense stock suitable for all vegetarian dishes. However, other ingredients can either be used alone, or added to konbu or shiitake dashi in different combinations, to create more complex dashi flavours. Kampyo (sun-dried gourd strips), oven-roasted daizu (dried soybeans) and dried daikon (white radish) are other popular choices. Vegetable and fruit peelings from carrots, daikon (white radish) and persimmon can also be used as bases for vegetarian dashi. You can even oven roast the peelings before using for more interesting and smoky dashi flavours.

PRIMARY KONBU DASHI

MAKES ABOUT 1 LITRE (1¾ PINTS/4 CUPS)

30g (1¼oz) konbu
1.2 litres (2 pints/5 cups) cold water
pinch of sea salt

1. Gently wipe the konbu with a damp cloth. Add the konbu and measured water to a pan, cover with a lid and let it stand for 8 hours or preferably overnight, so the konbu has time to release its flavour into the stock. The longer the soaking time, the more flavoursome your stock will be. At the end of the soaking time, remove the konbu from the water, add a pinch of salt and mix well. The konbu dashi is ready to be used.

2. If you are pressed for time, skip the soaking and simmer the water and konbu in a pan with the lid on at a very low heat (about 60°C/140°F) for an hour so that the konbu can release its flavour, but do not let it boil. Remove the konbu from the water and bring the stock to a full boil. Take off the heat, add a pinch of salt and the konbu dashi is now ready to be used.

3. The dashi will keep in the fridge for up to a week or in the freezer for up to 3 months. The leftover konbu can be used for Secondary Konbu Dashi (see right).

SECONDARY KONBU DASHI

MAKES ABOUT 1 LITRE (1¾ PINTS/4 CUPS)

The konbu that was used in the Primary Konbu Dashi (see left) can be re-used to make a secondary stock. Though weaker in flavour, it is a good base for braising fish, poultry and meat as well as vegetables.

reserved konbu from Primary Konbu Dashi (see left)
1 litre (1¾ pints/4 cups) cold water
pinch of sea salt

1. Place the reserved konbu and measured water in a pan with the lid on. Bring to a simmer over a medium heat and simmer gently for about 20 minutes.

2. Remove the konbu and strain the stock through a fine sieve (strainer) to avoid any impurities clouding the stock. Add a pinch of salt, and the stock is ready to use.

3. The dashi will keep for up to a week in the fridge or up to 3 months in the freezer. The leftover konbu can be used for Konbu No Tsukudani (see page 252).

SHIITAKE MUSHROOM DASHI

MAKES ABOUT 1 LITRE (1¾ PINTS/4 CUPS)

Dried shiitake mushrooms are rich in guanylate, a complex amino acid that adds great umami flavour to dashi stocks and food. After konbu, dried shiitake mushrooms are the preferred ingredient for vegetarian dashi stock in Japan.

1.2 litres (2 pints/5 cups) cold water or Primary or Secondary Konbu Dashi (see left and above)
5g (¼oz) konbu (if using water)
30g (1¼oz) dried shiitake mushrooms
1 tsp caster (superfine) sugar
pinch of sea salt

1. If using water, allow the konbu to soak in the measured water for 6–8 hours, then heat it in a pan until nearly boiling. If using konbu dashi, simply heat

it in a pan until hot but not boiling, then remove from the heat.

2. Add the shiitake mushrooms, sugar and salt to the hot water and konbu or the konbu dashi and let them soak for 2–4 hours. Remove the mushrooms, reserving them for another recipe (they can be sliced and used to flavour a number of dishes including rice, stir-fries, salads and noodles).

3. Strain the dashi into a bowl avoiding any sediment or grit from the bottom of the pan.

4. The dashi will keep in the fridge for a few days and in the freezer for up to 3 months.

VEGETABLE DASHI

MAKES ABOUT 1 LITRE (1¾ PINTS/4 CUPS)

In addition to konbu and dried shiitake mushrooms, other vegetables and their peelings can be used on their own to create a vegetarian dashi or added to konbu or shiitake dashi in different combinations, to create more complex flavours. You can also oven roast the peelings before using for smoky flavours.

2 litres (3½ pints/8 cups) cold water
400g (14oz) vegetable offcuts and peelings from 4 different kinds of vegetables such as carrots, daikon (white radish), Chinese cabbage, pumpkin or turnip
2 slices of root ginger (optional)
20g (¾oz) konbu

1. Place all the ingredients in a pan. Bring to the boil over a medium heat, then simmer until reduced by half.

2. Strain through a fine sieve (strainer) and use as required.

3. The dashi will keep in the fridge for a few days and in the freezer for up to 3 months.

MEAT-BASED DASHI

Though less popular than fish and konbu stocks, meat-based dashi made from chicken or duck can be used in dishes containing these types of poultry. They are ideal dashi for using in ramen and udon broths, hotpots and soups.

CHICKEN OR DUCK DASHI

MAKES ABOUT 1 LITRE (1¾ PINTS/4 CUPS)

1.5kg (3lb 5oz) chicken or duck bones
1 tbsp fine sea salt
2 spring onion (scallion) stalks, white part only
100g (3½oz) carrots
50g (1¾oz) root ginger
250ml (8½fl oz/1 cup) sake
3.5 litres (6 pints/14¾ cups) cold water

1. Remove any bits of fat from the chicken or duck bones. Rub the salt into the bones and set aside for 1 hour, this will help the salt to penetrate and flavour the bones.

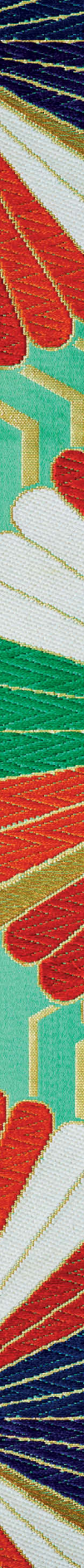
2. Preheat the oven to 180°C/350°F/gas mark 4. Place the bones in a roasting tin (pan) and roast in the oven for 30 minutes.

3. Meanwhile, cut the spring onion (scallion) stalks in half and carefully char them over a gas flame on the hob (stove) or under the grill (broiler). Wash and roughly slice the unpeeled carrots and ginger.

4. Transfer the hot roasted bones to a large stockpot and add the rest of the ingredients. Quickly bring to a boil, then simmer until the stock is reduced by half, skimming off any scum (bone blood) that rises to the surface.

5. Remove the bones from the pot, and pass the stock through a fine sieve (strainer).

6. The dashi will keep in the fridge for a few days and in the freezer for up to 3 months.



MAPLE-SOY CURED SALMON

with Asparagus and Shimeji Mushrooms

SERVES 4

For the cured salmon

500g (1lb 2oz) whole salmon belly (cut an entire salmon in half lengthways – the belly part is the lower, thinner, but fattier, half of the side)
50ml (2fl oz/¼ cup) soy sauce
50ml (2fl oz/¼ cup) maple syrup

For the vegetable accompaniment

500g (1lb 2oz) small asparagus spears, woody ends removed
2 tbsp soy sauce
2 tbsp maple syrup
2 tbsp rice vinegar or white wine vinegar
2cm (¾ inch) piece of root ginger, peeled and finely grated (or 1 heaped tsp good-quality ginger paste)
2 tbsp unsalted butter, melted
2 tbsp sunflower oil
150g (5½oz) shimeji mushrooms, bottom ends removed
1 tbsp chives, finely chopped or cut into small segments, to garnish
Maldon sea salt flakes
freshly ground black pepper

SOY SAUCE | RICE VINEGAR | GINGER | SHIMEJI MUSHROOMS

Japanese soy sauce meets Canadian maple syrup to create an umami-rich, sweet and savoury marinade-sauce, a great pairing for fatty salmon. An easy and quick dish that will wow your friends and family.

1. Skin the salmon and pin-bone if necessary to remove all bones. Prepare the marinade by combining the soy sauce and maple syrup in a small bowl. Place the salmon in a sealable bag and pour the marinade in. Seal the bag and let it marinate in the fridge for at least 6 hours, but ideally 18–24 hours.
2. An hour before serving the salmon, remove from the fridge and allow it to come to room temperature. Preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F/gas mark 6.
3. Discard the marinade and place the salmon skinned side up in a roasting tin (pan) lined with baking (parchment) paper. Roast the salmon in the oven for 9–12 minutes (depending on the thickness of the fish) until nicely caramelized on the outside; there is no need to flip the fish. You can check if the fish is done by piercing it with a small knife to make sure it is cooked through. Do not overcook the salmon or it will become dry and flaky.
4. In the meantime, cut the asparagus into equally sized spears 12–14cm (4½–5½ inches) long. They should be slightly longer than the width of the salmon as the asparagus will make up a bed for the whole salmon, and you want some of each spear showing on either side of the fish. Slice any leftover bits of asparagus into 5mm (¼ inch) pieces, and set aside.
5. Combine the soy sauce, maple syrup, rice vinegar and ginger in a small bowl. Add the melted butter and whisk until emulsified.
6. Heat the sunflower oil in a frying pan (skillet) over a high heat and sauté the asparagus spears for about 2 minutes until cooked but firm, then transfer to the serving plate and make a neat bed of asparagus spears aligned along the plate.
7. Add the shimeji mushrooms and reserved asparagus pieces to the same pan and fry for 30 seconds. Add the soy sauce and maple syrup mixture and cook for 1 minute to heat the sauce through and coat the vegetables thoroughly. Remove from the heat.
8. To serve, place the salmon over the asparagus (use a wide and long spatula to avoid it breaking up). Top the salmon with the mushroom and asparagus mixture. Spoon the warm sauce over the salmon, top with a sprinkle of chopped chives, sea salt flakes and black pepper and serve immediately.



MISO AND SATSUMA MARINATED SALMON

Grilled (Broiled) with Crushed Jersey Royal New Potatoes,
Butter and Tarragon

SERVES 2

2 salmon fillets (about
150g/5½oz each)
olive oil, to drizzle

For the miso-satsuma marinade

4 tbsp sweet white miso
(preferably saikyo miso)
2 tbsp mirin
1 tbsp sake
zest of 1 satsuma (about
2 tbsp)
1 tsp Maldon sea salt flakes

For the new potatoes

500g (1lb 2oz) Jersey Royal
new potatoes (or other
new potatoes)
2 tbsp unsalted butter
2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
2 tbsp tarragon, finely
chopped
Maldon sea salt flakes
freshly ground black pepper

To garnish

2 fresh bamboo leaves
(optional)
edible flowers (optional)

SAIKYO MISO | MIRIN | SAKE

Misozuke is a miso-based marinade (see page 74) used for curing vegetables, fish and meat. I use it here with satsuma zest for a citrus undertone that pairs wonderfully with the salmon and tarragon. For this recipe, I recommend the sweeter saikyo miso as other white miso varieties are saltier. If you cannot find saikyo, use less of the plain white miso and do not add any salt to the marinade. Jersey Royals are wonderful when in season, but other salad potatoes can also be used.

1. Prepare the miso-satsuma marinade by mixing all the marinade ingredients together in a bowl.
2. Transfer the marinade and salmon fillets to a sealable bag and gently massage the fillets in the mixture to ensure they are completely coated. Marinate for at least 12 hours and up to 2 days; the longer the marinating, the firmer and saltier the fish will be.
3. Remove the bag from the fridge 1-2 hours before cooking to bring the fish to room temperature.
4. Wash the new potatoes with a brush under running water but do not peel them. Cook in lightly salted boiling water for 15-20 minutes until tender.
5. While the potatoes are cooking, turn the grill (broiler) on to its maximum setting. Line a roasting tray (sheet) with foil, and drizzle a little olive oil over the foil.
6. Take the salmon out of the bag, and, using your hands, brush off the excess marinade. Place the fish on the prepared roasting tray (sheet) and grill (broil) skin side up for 3-4 minutes. Turn the fillets over and cook for a further 4 minutes. (Four minutes on each side will cook a 2.5-cm/1-inch thick salmon fillet to medium-rare.)
7. While the salmon is cooking, finish off the potatoes. Drain the new potatoes then return them to the pan. Crush each one lightly with a fork, then add the butter, olive oil and tarragon and some salt and black pepper to taste. Stir gently to coat the potatoes.
8. Serve the salmon on the bamboo leaves, if using, with the crushed new potatoes. Garnish with edible flowers, if you wish.



魚の煮付け

SERVES 2

- 1 quantity of Nitsuke Broth (see page 251)
- 2 halibut steaks (about 150g/5½oz each), skin on
- 4 tbsp sake (optional)
- 1 tbsp sunflower oil
- 4 Padron peppers
- Maldon sea salt flakes
- 2 root ginger slices, 3mm (⅛ inch) thick, 4cm (1½ inches) in diameter, cut into very fine julienne
- 4 rectangular pieces of silken tofu

SAKANA NO NITSUKE

Halibut Simmered in Sake, Soy Sauce and Mirin

NITSUKE BROTH (SAKE, SOY SAUCE, MIRIN, DASHI) | SILKEN TOFU | GINGER

In Japanese cooking, simmering (ni) is a very important method of cooking. For the non-Japanese, the idea of simmering may imply slow-cooking stews, but in Japan simmered dishes are prepared ever so quickly. Nitsuke (see page 251) refers to a simmering broth made of sake, soy sauce, mirin and dashi used primarily with fish. A quintessential, everyday cooking Japanese broth, Nitsuke takes only a few minutes to make but will bring tons of flavour to your cooking.

1. Make the Nitsuke Broth (see page 251). Make a cartouche by cutting a circle of baking (parchment) paper, which should be slightly smaller than the pan you will be using. Make a small tear or vent in the middle of the cartouche.
2. Baste the halibut steaks in the sake and let them steep in it for at least 30 minutes. This will help to eliminate any fish smells.
3. Bring the Nitsuke Broth to the boil. As the sauce reaches boiling point, carefully place the pieces of fish in the pan (the fish should be almost completely submerged in the sauce, or else the pan is too wide), and immediately cover with the prepared cartouche. Turn the heat down, and simmer very gently for 6–8 minutes.
4. Meanwhile, heat the sunflower oil in a small frying pan (skillet) and fry the Padron peppers until softened, lightly blackened and blistered. Season with the sea salt flakes.
5. Carefully transfer the fish to 2 separate serving bowls and pour a few tablespoons of the Nitsuke Broth over them. Top with the julienned ginger and place two Padron peppers and two pieces of silken tofu beside the fish on each plate. Serve immediately.



WHOLE DEEP-FRIED SEA BASS

in a Spicy, Sweet and Sour Japanese Dressing

SERVES 2

½ quantity of Nanban Sauce
(see page 248)
75g (2¾oz) carrot
75g (2¾oz) celery stick
75g (2¾oz) red onion
2.5cm (1 inch) piece of root
ginger, peeled and grated
1 whole large seabass
(about 600g/1lb 5oz),
gutted and scaled but
head, fins and tail left on
3 tbsp soy sauce
sunflower oil, for deep-
frying
50g (1¾oz/½ cup) plain
(all-purpose) flour, for
dredging
sea salt
freshly ground black
pepper

To garnish

1 red chilli, deseeded and
finely diced
1 tbsp toasted white sesame
seeds
handful of micro coriander
(micro cilantro) leaves and
edible flowers
1 tbsp Coriander (Cilantro)
Oil (see page 251) or
toasted sesame oil

NANBAN SAUCE (DASHI, SOY SAUCE, RICE VINEGAR) | SOY SAUCE | GINGER | SESAME SEEDS

Nanban roughly translates as 'Southern Barbarians', referring to Portuguese merchants and missionaries, among the first Westerners to enter Japan via the island of Kyushu. With them, they brought South American chillies, their love for deep-frying foods, and their habit of marinating them in vinegar and chillies. It was not long before the Japanese took a fancy to these new flavours, creating Nanban Sauce (see page 248), a zingy, sweet, sour and lightly spicy accompaniment to fried and steamed fish and chicken, or simply as a dressing over salad. I use Nanban Sauce here with a whole deep-fried sea bass in a dish that will impress your guests.

1. Make the Nanban Sauce (see page 248). If using the Coriander (Cilantro) Oil, you can also prepare this ahead of time (see page 251). Peel and cut the carrot and celery into fine julienne sticks about 4cm (1½ inches) long and 3mm (⅛ inch) thick. Peel the onion, cut into quarters, then slice very thinly lengthways.
2. Gently reheat the Nanban Sauce but do not boil it. Remove from the heat and add the sliced vegetables and ginger so the vegetables lightly cure and soften.
3. Score the sea bass with 3 angled cuts on each side. Place on a baking tray (sheet) and roll it in the soy sauce, leaving it to marinate for 15 minutes. Fill a deep-fat fryer, stable wok or large pan (large enough to accommodate the whole fish) with sunflower oil and preheat it to 180°C (350°F).
4. On a separate baking tray (sheet), season the flour with a little salt and pepper. Remove the fish from the soy sauce marinade, pat it dry with kitchen paper (paper towel) and lightly coat it in the seasoned flour. Carefully shake off any excess flour.
5. Either fry the fish in the deep-fat fryer basket so it curls slightly or place straight into the fryer, wok or pan, for a flatter appearance. Deep-fry the sea bass for about 8 minutes, until the skin is crispy and the flesh has a golden brown colour. Meanwhile, drain the julienned vegetables (reserving the Nanban Sauce). Use the vegetables to make a flattish bed (roughly the same size and length as the fish) on an oval platter or serving dish.
6. Place the deep-fried fish over the julienned vegetables, pour the reserved Nanban Sauce over and garnish with a scattering of diced red chillies, toasted white sesame seeds, micro coriander (micro cilantro) leaves and edible flowers. Drizzle the Coriander (Cilantro) Oil or toasted sesame oil over the dish and serve.



MACKEREL IN SOY AND BALSAMIC GLAZE

Grilled (Broiled) with Bok Choy, Ginger and Sesame Stir-Fry

SERVES 2

4 mackerel fillets, skin on, pin-boned
2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
1 garlic clove, crushed
freshly ground black pepper
1 tsp toasted white sesame seeds, to serve

For the soy and balsamic glaze

60ml (2fl oz/¼ cup) soy sauce
60ml (2fl oz/¼ cup) balsamic vinegar
60ml (2fl oz/¼ cup) dry white wine
20–30g (¾–1¼oz/1½–3 tbsp) muscovado sugar
30g (1¼oz/2 tbsp) unsalted butter, room temperature

For the bok choy stir-fry

2 tbsp sunflower oil
1 thumb-sized piece of root ginger, peeled and finely diced
2 garlic cloves, crushed
1 red chilli, deseeded and finely sliced
3 bok choy, quartered
2 tbsp water
sea salt
freshly ground black pepper

SOY SAUCE | WHITE SESAME SEEDS | GINGER

Soy sauce and balsamic vinegar make for a fantastic glaze. They add umami, refreshing acidity and a smack of sweetness that cut through fatty mackerel rather fabulously – a simple and quick dish that is big on flavour. No need to use posh, treacly balsamic vinegar for this recipe, and the required amount of sugar can be tweaked depending on the sweetness or tartness of the vinegar you use.

1. Score the skin of each mackerel fillet 3 times along the fillet, and season with the olive oil, garlic and black pepper. Let them rest at room temperature for at least 30 minutes and up to 1 hour.
2. Meanwhile, prepare the soy and balsamic glaze. Add the soy sauce, balsamic vinegar, dry white wine and two-thirds of the sugar to a small pan. Over a low heat, mix well until the sugar is completely dissolved. Taste the sauce and add the remaining sugar if desired. Bring to the boil, reduce by a third until lightly syrupy, then add the butter and mix well to emulsify. Turn off the heat.
3. Turn the grill (broiler) to its highest setting and place the mackerel on a greased baking tray (sheet), skin side up. Sprinkle the fillets with the olive oil marinade, then grill for 3–5 minutes or until the flesh is opaque and cooked through and the skin is lightly blistered.
4. As the mackerel grills (broils), heat the sunflower oil in a wok or a pan with a fitting lid, until smoking. Add the ginger, garlic and half the chilli and mix well to release their aroma and flavour. Add the bok choy and quickly stir-fry for about 15 seconds, then add the water, season with a little salt and pepper, cover the pan and fry for 1 more minute. Turn off the heat.
5. To serve, place 4 bok choy quarters on a serving platter side by side, facing alternate directions. Place a fillet of grilled mackerel between the pairs of bok choy quarters and place the remaining bok choy around the serving platter. Top the mackerel fillets and bok choy with a generous drizzle of soy and balsamic glaze, the remaining sliced chilli and a sprinkle of toasted white sesame seeds. Serve immediately.



鯛の幽庵焼き

SERVES 4

2 quantities of Yuan Marinade (see page 252)
4 sea bream fillets, pin-boned
100g (3½oz) samphire, washed
5 heritage tomatoes of various colours – red, yellow, green, brown
2 tbsp toasted sesame oil
2 tbsp micro coriander (micro cilantro) and red amaranth
Maldon sea salt flakes and freshly ground black pepper

TAI NO YUAN YAKI

Grilled (Broiled) Sea Bream in Soy, Mirin, Sake and Lime Marinade with Heritage Tomatoes and Samphire

YUAN MARINADE (SOY SAUCE, SAKE, MIRIN AND YUZU) | SESAME OIL

Yuan Yaki refers to a traditional Japanese marinade (Yuan) and method of cooking (Yaki). It is style of Yakimono (grilled/broiled food), made by lightly marinating fish in equal measures of soy sauce, mirin and sake plus citrus fruit and then grilling (broiling) it. Mackerel, salmon and chicken also work beautifully Yuan Yaki style.

1. Make the Yuan Marinade (see page 252).
2. Score the skin of the sea bream at 3 different places along the fillet. Place half the Yuan Marinade over the sea bream and marinate the fillets for 1–2 hours.
3. Heat the remaining Yuan Marinade to burn off the alcohol from the sake, then cool it down over a bowl of ice.
4. Heat your grill (broiler) to its highest setting. Line a roasting tin (pan) with a non-stick silicon mat or foil.
5. Blanch the samphire in boiling water for 2 minutes, refresh under fresh running water and drain thoroughly. Cut the tomatoes into bite-sized wedges, mix them with the samphire and season with the cooled Yuan Marinade.
6. Discard the Yuan Marinade used for the fish, place the sea bream in the prepared roasting tin (pan) skin side up and grill (broil) for 4–6 minutes or until the flesh is opaque and cooked through and the skin is lightly blistered. Cooking time will vary depending on the thickness of the fillets, so check for doneness after 4 minutes of cooking.
7. Heat the toasted sesame oil until smoking hot. Meanwhile, spread the tomato and samphire mixture evenly over a serving platter to make a bed for the sea bream fillets. Carefully place the whole grilled fillets over the tomato and samphire bed, spoon over the fresh, cooled Yuan Marinade followed by the hot sesame oil, and a generous sprinkle of micro coriander (cilantro) and red amaranth, sea salt and black pepper. Serve immediately.



SERVES 4

1 quantity of steamed white rice (see page 138), to serve
1 quantity of Nitsuke Broth (see page 251)
120ml (4fl oz/½ cup) ginger ale
400g (14oz) whole tuna piece
1 tsp toasted white sesame seeds
2 tbsp kaiso seaweed mix, rehydrated in warm water for 20 minutes
scattering of green micro herbs

GINGER ALE AND SOY BRAISED TUNA

on Steamed White Rice

NITSUKE BROTH (SAKE, SOY SAUCE, MIRIN AND DASHI) | SHORT-GRAIN RICE | KAISO SEAWEED MIX | SESAME SEEDS

Sweet, savoury and gingery chunks of meltingly tender tuna on Japanese white rice, which is a doddle to prepare. Another great use of Nitsuke Broth (see page 251), paired here with ginger ale. Slow-braising the tuna will render it very soft and flavoursome, but do use the freshest fish you can get.

1. Make a cartouche by cutting a circle of baking (parchment) paper, which should be slightly smaller than the pan you will be using. Make a small tear or vent in the middle of the cartouche.
2. Cook the white rice (see page 138) and keep it warm.
3. Make the Nitsuke Broth (see page 251). Add the ginger ale to the broth and bring to the boil. Meanwhile, cut the tuna into chunky bite-sized pieces.
4. As the broth reaches boiling point, carefully place the pieces of tuna into the pan, and immediately cover with the cartouche. Bring the heat down, and simmer gently for 1 hour.
5. To serve, divide the rice equally between 4 separate bowls and top with the pieces of braised tuna. Pour a few tablespoons of the nitsuke braising sauce over the tuna, followed by a scattering of toasted white sesame seeds, kaiso seaweed mix and green micro herbs. Serve immediately.



LOBSTER WITH KARASHI-SU-MISO

Grilled (Broiled) Lobster in Japanese Karashi Mustard, Rice Vinegar and White Miso Sauce

SERVES 2

1 quantity of Karashi-Su-Miso (see page 249)
50g (1¾oz/½ cup) edamame beans, fresh or frozen, shelled
2 lobster tails, about 120g (4oz) each
20g (¾oz/1½ tbs) unsalted butter, cut into small cubes
50g (1¾oz/3 tbs) fine cooking salt
generous pinch of Maldon sea salt flakes
edible flowers and green micro herbs such as micro shiso or micro basil, to decorate (optional)

SAIKYO MISO | KARASHI MUSTARD | RICE VINEGAR | SAKE | EDAMAME BEANS

Karashi-Su-Miso (see page 249) is a wonderful Japanese sauce made from sweet white miso (saikyo is one such kind), rice vinegar and karashi mustard. Sweet, savoury and tangy, with a hint of spiciness, it is traditionally used with fish and seafood but lends itself brilliantly to other meats and vegetables such as roast ham and grilled (broiled) asparagus. This is an elegant and yet easily achievable recipe with quintessential Japanese flavours which is sure to impress your friends and family.

1. Prepare the Karashi-Su-Miso (see page 249). Set aside until needed.
2. Cook the shelled edamame beans for a few minutes in boiling water until tender, then set aside. Preheat the grill (broiler) to its highest setting.
3. If you bought the whole lobster, remove its head, arms, legs and claws and keep these for another dish, we will only use the lobster tail for this recipe. Using a pair of scissors, carefully cut along the inside length of the lobster tail on both sides, removing the hard shell and small legs to expose the meat but making sure not to break the outer shell. The shells will be used to serve the dish.
4. Place the lobster tails, meat facing down and hard shell facing up, on a rack placed inside a roasting tin (pan), and grill (broil) the tails for 4 minutes. Remove from the oven, and very gently remove the partially cooked meat from its shell. Cut the meat into bite-sized chunks.
5. Place the lobster meat in a bowl with the edamame beans. Add most of the Karashi-Su-Miso and mix gently. Fill the tails with the mixture of lobster meat, edamame and sauce, then spoon a little more of the sauce on top and dot with the cubes of butter. Carefully place the lobster tails back on the rack (meat facing up this time), and grill (broil) for 5 minutes.
6. Meanwhile, place the cooking salt in a bowl, add a couple of teaspoons of water, and mix well to make a salt sludge. It should not be too wet. Place in the middle of two serving plates and press down into two compact salt mounds.
7. When cooked, remove the lobster tails from the oven, carefully place them over the salt mounds and lightly press them down so that they are well secured. Sprinkle a generous pinch of sea salt flakes over the lobster tails, add the edible flowers and green micro herbs, if using, and serve immediately.



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SERVES 4

1 quantity of steamed white rice (see page 138)
480ml (16fl oz/2 cups)
Primary Dashi (see page 20)
150ml (5fl oz/2/3 cup) soy sauce
4 tbsp mirin
2 tbsp sake
4 tbsp caster (superfine) sugar
400g (14oz) chicken thighs, skinless
8 eggs, at room temperature
250g (9oz) onions, peeled and sliced lengthways
2 tbsp finely chopped chives, to garnish
kizami nori (fine strands) or sushi nori (cut up into little squares)
sansho pepper, to serve

OYAKODON

Poached Chicken and Egg in Dashi and Soy Broth Served on White Rice

DASHI | SHORT-GRAIN RICE | SOY SAUCE | SAKE | MIRIN | KIZAMI NORI | SANSHO PEPPER

A Japanese home-cooking classic, aptly named mother and child, Oyakodon is a dish of chicken and eggs poached in a dashi-based broth. The dashi and chicken quality are paramount. Oyakodon is a super easy to prepare all-in-one kind of dish that feeds, warms and comforts an entire nation.

1. Cook the white rice (see page 138). Keep it warm.
2. Prepare the Primary Dashi (see page 20). This dish is all about the dashi stock, but if you do not have the ingredients for this, you can use a dashi infusion bag (follow the instructions on the packet) or use instant dashi powder as a last resort (1/2 tablespoon instant dashi powder dissolved in 500ml/18fl oz/generous 2 cups boiling water).
3. In a bowl combine the Primary Dashi, soy sauce, mirin, sake and sugar and mix well until the sugar has dissolved.
4. Cut the chicken into bite-sized slices and set aside. Break the eggs into a bowl, very lightly stir with chopsticks or a fork and set aside.
5. In a shallow pan (but deep enough to accommodate all the ingredients) bring the dashi mixture to the boil, then add the chicken and onions, cover, turn the heat down to medium and simmer gently for 5 minutes.
6. Gradually pour two-thirds of the lightly stirred egg into the pan, working from the centre of the pan to the edges in a gentle swirling motion. Cook for about 1 minute, then add the remaining egg around the pan and cook for a further 30 seconds. Turn off the heat and let the dish rest, covered, for 1 more minute.
7. While the oyako dish is resting, share the rice between 4 serving bowls. Cover the rice with the chicken, egg, onion and dashi mixture and top with a garnish of chopped chives, kizami nori or sushi nori and sansho pepper. Serve immediately.



ROAST SOY AND BUTTER CHICKEN

Chicken in Soy, Butter and Spicy Chilli Sauce

SERVES 4

8 chicken joints or thighs (about 2kg/4½lb), ideally corn-fed
1.2kg (2½lb) roasting potatoes (such as Maris Piper or King Edwards)
¾ tbspc plain (all-purpose) flour
Maldon sea salt flakes, to taste
4 lemon wedges, to serve
generous sprinkle of micro coriander (micro cilantro), to garnish

For the marinade

160g (5¾oz/¾ cup) unsalted butter, melted
120ml (4fl oz/½ cup) soy sauce
80ml (3fl oz/⅓ cup) Frank's Original Hot Chilli Sauce
3–4 garlic cloves, crushed
1½ chicken stock cubes, crushed

SOY SAUCE

An all-in-one roast chicken dish using soy sauce, butter and chilli sauce – the roast potatoes soak up all the delicious chicken drippings and marinade. This is another great use of soy sauce to bring out umami in your kitchen.

1. Prepare the marinade – mix all the marinade ingredients together in a bowl. Add the chicken joints, making sure you cover them completely, and marinate for at least 1 hour at room temperature and up to 24 hours in the fridge.
2. When ready to start cooking, preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F/gas mark 6. Lightly oil a large roasting tin (pan), with a fitted wire rack over it.
3. Peel the potatoes, cut them into halves or quarters roughly the same size and add them to a pan filled with fresh, salted water. Bring to the boil and partially cook for about 3 minutes. Drain the potatoes in a colander, shaking it vigorously so the edges of the potatoes are lightly roughened. Sprinkle the flour over the potatoes, shaking them again to coat the potatoes and transfer them to the prepared roasting tin (pan), ideally in one single layer.
4. Place the wire rack over the potatoes (without squashing them), and spread out the marinated chicken joints, skin side up, over the rack in a single layer. Roast for 20 minutes, take them out of the oven, carefully placing the rack and chicken joints over a chopping (cutting) board (use oven gloves/mitts as the rack will be hot!), and baste the potatoes well. If the chicken joints are very fatty, drain some of the fat off into a jug (pitcher), reserving it for the gravy.
5. Replace the rack with the chicken joints. Return the roasting tin (pan) to the oven and cook for a further 20–25 minutes or until the chicken juices run clear when one of the joints is pierced with a sharp knife.
6. Remove the roasting tin (pan) from the oven. Place the rack with the chicken over a chopping (cutting) board and let it rest for about 5 minutes, keeping it warm with a layer of foil over the chicken.
7. Set your grill (broiler) to its highest setting. Mix the potatoes in the roasting tin (pan), draining off any excess fat. Return it to the oven, under the hot grill (broiler), and cook for an additional 5–10 minutes if you want crispier roast potatoes, keeping an eye on them and turning them over so they do not burn.
8. Before serving, whisk the chicken, butter and soy juices in a pan (I find an electric hand blender works well for this). Bring to the boil then check for seasoning and adjust if necessary. Serve the chicken joints with the crispy roast potatoes, lemon wedges, gravy and the micro coriander (micro cilantro).



MARMITE CHICKEN

Crispy Chicken, Marmite and Soy Sauce with Sweet Cucumber and Wakame Pickle

SERVES 4

500g (1lb 2oz) chicken thighs, boneless and skin on
1 garlic clove, crushed
1 tbsp soy sauce
sunflower oil, for deep-frying
4 tbsp katakuriko potato starch or cornflour (cornstarch)
2 tbsp spring onions (scallions), thinly sliced on the diagonal, to garnish

For the Marmite and soy sauce

2 tbsp Marmite
2 tbsp dark soy sauce
8 tbsp mirin (or 4 tbsp honey mixed with 4 tbsp water)
4 tbsp sake or shao xing wine

For the sweet cucumber and wakame pickle

160ml (5½fl oz/⅔ cup) rice vinegar
160ml (5½fl oz/⅔ cup) water
120g (4oz/⅓ cup) granulated sugar
2 tbsp sea salt
2 large cucumbers, thinly sliced
1 large red chilli, thinly sliced
2 tbsp dried wakame seaweed

SOY SAUCE | MIRIN | SAKE | KATAKURIKO POTATO STARCH | RICE VINEGAR | WAKAME SEAWEED

Just like soy sauce and balsamic vinegar, soy sauce and Marmite is an umami-rich combination. This recipe was inspired by a recent trip to Malaysia, where a similar Nyonya dish is ubiquitous. I tweaked it though, increasing the Marmite kick and making it less sweet. This is one of my favourite recipes in this book!

1. Make the sweet cucumber pickle first – this can be made in advance. Combine the rice vinegar, measured water and sugar in a pan and bring to the boil over a high heat. Remove from the heat and let it cool down for 1 hour.
2. In a colander, sprinkle the salt over the cucumber slices and rub it over them until they are completely covered. Place a plate with a weight on top over the cucumber slices and leave for about 1 hour. (I place the colander over a sink or large bowl as the cucumber releases a lot of water.) When ready, squeeze as much water out of the cucumber as possible, but do not rinse it. Add the cucumber and chilli to the cooled rice vinegar mix and let them pickle in this mixture for at least a couple of hours.
3. Cut the chicken into bite-sized pieces, place in a bowl, add the garlic and soy sauce, mix well and leave for at least 30 minutes and up to 2 hours.
4. Twenty minutes before serving the pickles, soak the wakame seaweed in a bowl filled with cold water for 2–3 minutes, drain, squeeze out the water and roughly chop the seaweed if too large. Add the wakame to the pickled mixture and mix well. The pickle is ready to be served or can be stored in the refrigerator in an airtight, sealable container for up to 1 month.
5. Meanwhile, in a separate bowl, whisk together all the ingredients for the Marmite and soy sauce until the Marmite has completely dissolved.
6. To deep-fry the chicken, add sunflower oil to a medium-sized pan, and heat it to 170°C (338°F). Just before you start deep-frying, coat the chicken in katakuriko potato starch or cornflour (cornstarch), shake off any excess flour and carefully add the chicken to the pan. You may need to cook it in a couple of batches so as not to overcrowd the pan. Cook the chicken for 8–10 minutes until golden brown, then drain on a plate lined with kitchen paper (paper towel).
7. Add the Marmite and soy sauce to a pan, heat it through to burn off the alcohol and until it is slightly thickened, then add the chicken pieces and mix well to coat them in the sauce. Serve immediately topped with the spring onions (scallions) and the sweet cucumber pickle on the side.



ROAST DUCK IN CLEMENTINE TERIYAKI GLAZE

with a Clementine and Toasted Coconut Salad

SERVES 2

1 quantity of Clementine Teriyaki Sauce (see page 248)
2 duck breasts (about 250g/9oz each)
sea salt
freshly ground black pepper

For the clementine salad

2 tbsp desiccated (shredded) coconut
1 tbsp peanuts, toasted
2 clementines, peeled, segmented and white pith removed
4 physalis (cape gooseberries), washed and quartered
¼ red onion, finely sliced
2 tbsp chopped coriander (cilantro)
½ red chilli, finely diced
micro coriander (micro cilantro) and edible flowers, to decorate (optional)

For the salad dressing

1 tbsp light soy sauce (usukuchi shoyu)
1 tbsp lime juice
1 tbsp caster (superfine) sugar
generous pinch of crushed chilli (dried red pepper) flakes

TERIYAKI SAUCE (SOY SAUCE, SAKE, MIRIN)

A Japanese inspired, savoury and sweet Duck a l'orange. Duck breasts are so fast to cook, just the time you need to whip up the salad.

1. Make the Clementine Teriyaki Sauce (see page 248) as it will need to infuse for at least 30 minutes before being used, reserving the fruit for the salad.
2. Preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F/gas mark 6. To make the salad dressing, mix all the ingredients in a bowl until the sugar is completely dissolved. Reserve.
3. In a frying pan (skillet), dry fry the desiccated (shredded) coconut for a couple of minutes until lightly golden, then set aside. In the same pan, dry fry the peanuts for a few minutes until toasted, remove from the heat and roughly chop.
4. Pat the skin of the duck breasts with kitchen paper (paper towel) to remove excess moisture, score the skin and lightly season with salt and black pepper. Place the breasts skin side down in a cold non-stick frying pan (skillet) on a medium heat without oil and cook for 6–8 minutes or until golden brown. Pour off the fat regularly and seal the other side of the breast for 30 seconds.
5. Add about a third of the Clementine Teriyaki Sauce to a large bowl, reserving the rest, and add the seared duck breasts. Marinate for about 10 minutes.
6. Place the duck breasts skin side up over a rack within a roasting tin (pan) in the middle of the oven. Cook for 7 minutes for rare, 10 minutes for medium and 14 minutes for well done. Halfway through the cooking time, baste the duck breasts with the Clementine Teriyaki Sauce used for the marinade, and then baste again a couple of minutes before you take them out of the oven, discarding any remaining marinade. Cover and rest the meat for a few minutes.
7. Meanwhile, in a bowl, mix the clementines, physalis (cape gooseberries), red onion, coriander (cilantro) and chilli together with most of the desiccated (shredded) coconut and peanuts, reserving a little of the coconut and peanuts for garnish.
8. To serve, mix the salad dressing into the clementine salad, transfer to the serving plates and sprinkle the remaining coconut and peanuts over it. Cut the duck breasts into 5mm (¼ inch) slices and place alongside the salad. Drizzle a couple of tablespoons of the reserved Clementine Teriyaki Sauce (not used for marinating) over the duck slices, top with the micro coriander (micro cilantro) and edible flowers, if using, and serve.



PAN-FRIED T-BONE STEAK

in a Soy, Honey and Butter Glaze with Roasted Garlic

SERVES 2 AS A MAIN
OR 4 AS A STARTER

1 x 800g–1kg (1lb 12oz–
2¼lb) T-bone steak (at
least 21-day dry-aged)

For the soy, honey and butter glaze

60ml (2fl oz/¼ cup) dark
soy sauce
100g (3½oz/½ cup)
unsalted butter, melted
30g (1¼oz/1½ tbsp) honey
1 garlic clove, crushed

To garnish

4 whole garlic bulbs
2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
handful of micro herbs
edible flower
generous pinch of Maldon
sea salt flakes
freshly ground black pepper

SOY SAUCE

A simple marinade and sauce with two of my favourite ingredients – soy sauce and butter. Added to good-quality steak, this is a delicious combination of ingredients that really brings home the flavour and versatility of Japanese soy sauce in everyday cooking.

1. Remove the steak from the fridge at least 2 hours before cooking.
2. Preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F/gas mark 6. Peel and discard the papery outer layer of the whole garlic bulbs, leaving the skins of the individual cloves. Using a sharp knife, cut about 1cm (½ inch) from the top, exposing the individual cloves of garlic. Place the garlic heads on a baking tray (sheet), drizzle the olive oil over each head, using your fingers to rub the oil over all the exposed garlic cloves. Cover with foil and bake in the oven for 35 minutes, or until the cloves are lightly browned and feel soft when pressed. Keep warm.
3. Meanwhile, prepare the soy, honey and butter glaze – add all the ingredients to a bowl and mix well. Divide the glaze equally between 3 separate bowls.
4. Thirty minutes before pan-frying the steak, use 1 bowl of glaze to lightly marinate the steak. Let it rest at room temperature.
5. Heat a griddle pan over a high heat until seriously hot and smoking, then add the steak to the pan and fry it. The cooking time will depend on how hot your pan is, the thickness of your steak, but most importantly your preferred doneness i.e. rare, medium-rare, medium or well-done. I use the highly scientific 'finger poke method' to know when the meat is done. I like my roughly 4-cm (1½-inch) thick steak rather pink and barely medium-rare, so the meat should feel bouncy but firm. To achieve this I cook it for about 10 minutes in total or 5 minutes on each side. If you like your steak a little less pink, put in the preheated oven and cook for a further 5 minutes.
6. While the steak is frying, using a pastry brush, baste it liberally on both sides with another of the reserved bowls of glaze.
7. When ready to serve, transfer the steak to a board and let it rest for a couple of minutes.
8. Serve the steak with the roasted garlic, reserved bowl of glaze as a dipping sauce, a scattering of micro herbs, an edible flower and a generous sprinkle of sea salt flakes and freshly ground black pepper.



SIRLOIN STEAK IN MISO, TOBANJAN CHILLI AND GARLIC SAUCE

SERVES 4

1 quantity of Miso, Tobanjan Chilli and Garlic Sauce (see page 249)
2 x 250g (9oz) sirloin steaks (preferably 30-day dry-aged and 3cm/1¼ inches thick)
sunflower oil, for deep-frying and frying
6 garlic cloves, peeled and thinly sliced
2 tbsp chives, finely chopped
1 tsp toasted white sesame seeds

MISO | TOBANJAN CHILLI BEAN PASTE | SESAME OIL AND SEEDS

Bursting with umami, the Miso, Tobanjan Chilli and Garlic Sauce (see page 249) adds tons of flavour to this dish and others such as Daikon (White Radish) Fries (see page 206) or Onigirazu Rice Sandwiches (see page 86). Tobanjan is a Chinese import but widely used and much loved in Japan for its chilli kick, depth of flavour and versatility. I like adding it to everything!

1. Prepare the Miso, Tobanjan Chilli and Garlic Sauce (see page 249), but just before thinning it out with water, place about a third of the sauce into a clean bowl, add the steaks and rub them thoroughly in the sauce. Place the steaks in a sealable container and marinate them in the fridge for 2–8 hours. Finish making the rest of the Miso, Tobanjan Chilli and Garlic Sauce.
2. Heat the sunflower oil for deep-frying in a small pan to 160°C (320°F), fry the garlic slices for 2–3 minutes until lightly coloured, then transfer them to a plate lined with kitchen paper (paper towel) to drain; the garlic chips (fries) will crisp up as they dry. Do not overcook the garlic chips (fries) or they will turn bitter, so keep an eye on them as they fry.
3. The steaks should be taken out of the fridge an hour or so prior to cooking. When you are ready to cook, heat a couple of tablespoons of sunflower oil in a non-stick frying pan (skillet) until searingly hot, add the steaks and cook for 2–3 minutes on each side for medium-rare. Alternatively, take 1 steak out of the pan and slice it through its thickest part to check for doneness.
4. Using the sharpest knife you have, slice the meat very thinly, ham thickness if you can. Place the slices in a row, drizzle some of the Miso, Tobanjan Chilli and Garlic Sauce over them, and top with the chives, garlic chips (fries) and white sesame seeds. Serve immediately.



LAMB CUTLETS IN SPICY GREEN MISO

Grilled (Broiled) with White Miso, Green Jalapeño Chillies and Coriander (Cilantro)

SERVES 4

12 lamb cutlets,
approximately 175g
(6¼oz) each
4 tbsp extra virgin olive oil

For the green miso marinade

150g (5½oz/½ cup plus 2
tbsp) white miso
30g (1¼oz/½ cup) coriander
(cilantro) leaves, roughly
chopped
4 green jalapeño or hot
green finger chillies,
deseeded and chopped
4 garlic cloves, crushed
2.5cm (1 inch) piece of root
ginger, peeled and grated
3 anchovy fillets
½ tsp fine sea salt
1 tsp white pepper
4 tbsp rice vinegar or white
wine vinegar
zest of ½ lime
juice of 1 lime
3 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
1 tbsp toasted sesame oil

To garnish

1 tsp toasted white sesame
seeds
micro herbs and edible
flowers (optional)

WHITE MISO | RICE VINEGAR | SESAME OIL AND SEEDS

This spicy green miso is zingy, fresh and a fantastic accompaniment to lamb, fatty mackerel and even chicken thighs. It is a doddle to make but packs a real punch of umami flavour and chilli heat. If you are not a huge fan of coriander (cilantro), you can use other green herbs such as basil or tarragon. This is a personal favourite recipe.

1. Place all the ingredients for the green miso marinade in a food processor and blend to a smooth green paste. Rub the lamb cutlets generously in about two-thirds of the green miso mixture and marinade for at least 4 hours or preferably overnight in the fridge.
2. Add 4 tbsp of extra virgin olive oil to the remaining green miso marinade and mix well. This will be used for basting the lamb cutlets during grilling (broiling) as well as a sauce for the barbecued cutlets. Place the mixture in an airtight container and reserve until needed.
3. Remove the lamb cutlets from the fridge at least 1 hour before cooking to bring them to room temperature.
4. To barbecue the cutlets, first ensure the grill bars are clean and brushed generously with oil. Preheat the barbecue to very hot. Remove the lamb cutlets from the marinade, brushing off any excess; discard the marinade. Cook the cutlets on the barbecue grill for 3–4 minutes on each side, basting each cutlet with some green miso sauce after flipping them over. Remove from the grill and rest the cutlets in a warm place for a couple of minutes then serve with a scattering of white sesame seeds and micro herbs and edible flowers if using.
5. If you don't have a barbecue, cook the cutlets under a hot grill (broiler). Place the cutlets over a wire rack within a roasting tin (pan) and grill (broil) them for about 4 minutes on each side, basting each cutlet with some of the green miso sauce after flipping them over. If using the kitchen grill (broiler), a meat thermometer read is more accurate than on the barbecue – the internal temperature of the meat should be 60°C (140°F) for rare, 63°C (145°F) for medium rare, 71°C (160°F) for medium and 77°C (170°F) for well-done. If you don't have a meat thermometer, you can check doneness by cutting a small piece from one of the cutlets. Rest the cutlets for a couple of minutes and serve with the remaining green miso sauce.



SLOW-BRAISED PORK BELLY

in Barley Miso

SERVES 4

1 quantity of steamed white rice (see page 138)
1kg (2¼lb) skinless pork belly (or baby back pork ribs), cut into 3cm (1¼ inch) cubes
4 tbsp cooking sake (optional)
1 tbsp sunflower oil (or use some of the fat from the pork belly)
2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
500ml (18fl oz/2 cups) water
125g (4oz/½ cup) light-brown barley miso
2 tbsp granulated sugar dissolved in 2 tbsp water, or use 4 tbsp mirin
2 tbsp toasted sesame oil
fine sea salt or dark soy sauce, to taste
2 spring onions (scallions), finely sliced
½ tsp toasted white sesame seeds, to garnish
micro herbs, to garnish (optional)

BARLEY MISO | SAKE | SESAME OIL AND SEEDS

Barley miso has an earthy and wholesome flavour that goes well with pork but other types of miso can also be used. The sake is optional but it will help take away any pork smells and tenderize the meat. The belly should be meltingly soft and the brown miso sauce reduced and very flavoursome. This is an ideal dish for your week's lunchbox as the flavours improve over time, so do make double quantities if you can. All you need is steamed white rice or rustic bread to go with it.

1. Cook the white rice (see page 138) and keep warm.
2. Place the pork belly cubes (or baby back pork ribs) in a lidded container, add the cooking sake, if using, and mix well to coat the pork. Close the container and let the meat rest for 30–60 minutes. The sake will help tenderize the pork and take away some of its strong smell.
3. Ideally use a pressure cooker as it will save you time, otherwise use a heavy pan with a lid. Heat the sunflower oil (or pork belly fat) in the pressure cooker or pan over a medium heat, add the garlic and gently fry for a few seconds until fragrant. Now add the pork cubes and sake and fry for about 5 minutes, stirring from time to time, until the meat is lightly coloured and caramelized.
4. Meanwhile, mix the measured water, miso, sugar and 1 tablespoon of the sesame oil in a measuring jug (pitcher) until the miso is completely dissolved. Pour this over the meat. If you are using a pressure cooker, cook the meat for 25 minutes once high pressure is achieved. If using a pan, bring the pork and its miso cooking broth to the boil and simmer for 45 minutes over a gentle heat with the lid on.
5. Release the pressure from the pressure cooker (preferably naturally by allowing the pan to cool down or by releasing the pressure valve) and carefully open. If you are cooking in the pan, just take off the lid. Continue cooking over a medium heat for a further 25–30 minutes, or until most of the liquid has evaporated and the meat is fork tender.
6. Check for seasoning and add a touch of sea salt or soy sauce if necessary (different brands of miso will have a different salt content). Drizzle the remaining tablespoon of sesame oil over the meat and very gently mix this in.
7. Transfer to a serving bowl and finish with a scattering of sliced spring onions (scallions), white sesame seeds and micro herbs, if using. Serve immediately with steamed white rice or another accompaniment of your choice.



豚の角煮

SERVES 4

1 tbsp sunflower oil
1kg (2¼lb) boneless pork belly, in 1 piece
200g (7oz/1 cup) brown rice
700ml (1¼ pints/3 cups) apple cider
½ tbsp instant dashi powder
120ml (4fl oz/½ cup) sake
120ml (4fl oz/½ cup) soy sauce
120ml (4fl oz/½ cup) mirin
60g (2oz/½ cup) soft dark brown sugar
35g (1¼oz) root ginger, thinly sliced
1 tbsp katakuriko potato starch or cornflour (cornstarch), dissolved in 2 tbsp cold water (optional)
1 tbsp root ginger, peeled and finely julienned
1 tbsp Japanese karashi (or English) mustard

BUTA NO KAKUNI

Pork Belly Squares in Cider, Soy Sauce and Brown Sugar

DASHI | SOY SAUCE | SAKE | MIRIN | GINGER | KARASHI MUSTARD

One of the most loved comfort foods in Japan, the secret for meltingly tender pork is its slow simmering in rice. Kakuni means square in Japanese, so cut the meat as squarely as you can.

1. Heat the oil in a large, heavy casserole (Dutch oven) over a medium-high heat. Add the pork belly, skin side down, and sear for about 5 minutes until golden brown. Turn over and brown on the other side for about 5 minutes more. Transfer to a colander and rinse under hot water to remove any excess oil. Pour off and discard the fat from the casserole (Dutch oven), then wipe clean. Preheat the oven to 160°C/320°F/gas mark 3.

2. Return the pork to the casserole (Dutch oven). Sprinkle the rice over the meat. Pour in enough cold water to cover by 2.5cm (1 inch) and bring to a simmer over a high heat. Cover with a lid, place in the preheated oven and braise gently until the pork is tender when pierced with a knife. This will take about 2 hours (and up to 6 hours). Check regularly and add water to the pot if necessary, as the meat should be kept covered in liquid throughout this process. Remove from the oven.

3. Carefully remove the pork, keeping it in one piece. Discard the rice and the cooking liquid and wash the pork under running water to remove any residue. Dry the pork belly with kitchen paper (paper towel) or a clean tea towel (dish cloth), and let it cool down to room temperature. Tightly wrap in clingfilm (plastic wrap) and refrigerate for at least 2 hours and up to 2 days.

4. Cut the pork crosswise into 4–8 square pieces of roughly equal size. In a heavy casserole (Dutch oven), add the cider, instant dashi powder, sake, soy sauce, mirin, brown sugar and ginger, stirring over a high heat until all the ingredients are mixed completely. Add the pork to the pan and bring to the boil, then turn down to a simmer and cook, turning occasionally, for 1–2 hours or until the pork is very tender.

5. Carefully strain the cooking liquid into a pan, and reduce over a high heat for about 6 minutes until lightly syrupy and concentrated. Be careful not to over-reduce the sauce as it will become too salty; if you need some thickening help, dissolve the potato starch or cornflour (cornstarch) in the measured water and whisk in, little by little, until the sauce thickens to a coating consistency. Check for seasoning and adjust as necessary.

6. To serve, top each piece of pork with about 2 tablespoons of the reduced sauce and the julienned ginger and add a dollop of Japanese mustard.



BROWN BUTTER AND MISO LINGUINE

Pasta with Brown Butter and Miso Sauce

SERVES 4 AS A STARTER
OR 2 AS A MAIN

For the pasta

200g (7oz) dried linguine
pasta
2 tbsp pine nuts
2 tbsp chopped flat-leaf
parsley
freshly ground black pepper
2 tbsp freshly grated
Parmesan cheese
micro parsley or basil
(optional)

For the sauce

75g (2³/₄oz/1/3 cup) unsalted
butter
1 banana shallot, peeled and
finely sliced
2 tbsp light brown or white
miso paste

BROWN OR WHITE MISO

This is a super easy, quick mid-week dinner and a fantastic way to introduce Japanese miso into your everyday cooking. It is also terribly addictive. Different miso brands will vary in saltiness, so always check and adjust the quantities if necessary.

1. In a large pan filled with boiling salted water, cook the linguine until al dente following the packet instructions. Drain, reserving some of the cooking liquor.
2. Meanwhile, dry-fry the pine nuts in a non-stick frying pan (skillet) until lightly golden, then roughly chop and set aside until needed.
3. Make the sauce in the same frying pan (skillet). Melt the butter, stirring from time to time. When the butter starts to brown and smell slightly nutty, lower the heat and add the shallot, coating it in the butter. Cook for a couple of minutes until the shallot is softened, remove from the heat, then add the brown miso paste and a few tablespoons of the reserved pasta cooking liquor. Using a whisk, mix the miso vigorously into the browned butter until the sauce is well combined, creamy and lump-free.
4. Add the drained pasta to the pan with the sauce and add the pine nuts, parsley and black pepper and toss well. Finish off with a generous sprinkle of Parmesan cheese and some micro parsley or basil, if you wish, and serve immediately.





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DRIED, FERMENTED AND PRESERVED JAPANESE INGREDIENTS





B



C



D



G



J



E



F



H



I



J



FERMENTED INGREDIENTS

KOJI – SHIO, SHOYU AND AMA

Fermentation is an indispensable process in the production of many foodstuffs in Japan. To activate fermentation, Japanese producers use a mould culture known as koji kin (*Aspergillus oryzae*).

Grains such as rice (the most popular choice), barley or soybeans are inoculated with koji kin, which will then propagate giving rise to a koji culture. This culture is added to other ingredients to aid fermentation and create a number of key foods – for example to ferment soybeans and make soy sauce and miso, or added to rice in the production of sake and rice vinegar. There are dozens of different koji moulds, and each one is used in the production of a particular ingredient.

Koji culture has many uses – not only is it necessary in fermentation to create all the ingredients above, but when combined with other ingredients, can also be used for flavouring, curing and preserving foods. For example, a mixture of malted rice (koji), water and salt (shio) is called shio koji. Malted rice combined with soy sauce (shoyu) becomes shoyu koji. Adding the koji to rice porridge will make sweet ama koji.

You can buy salt (shio), shoyu (soy sauce) and sweet (ama) koji seasonings from most Japanese grocers or online, or you can make your own at home by following my instructions on pages 244 and 245.

A: SHIO KOJI	G: MENTAIKO
B: TSUKEMONO PICKLES	H: TSUKEMONO
C: SHOYU OR SOY SAUCE KOJI	I: PICKLES INCLUDING PLUMS (UMEBOSHI)
D: UMEBOSHI PASTE	J: SAKE LEES (SAKE KASU)
E: NATTO	K: NARUTO MAKI FISH CAKE (KAMABOKO)
F: CHIKUWA FISH CAKE (KAMABOKO)	

Shio (Salt) Koji

Shio koji has been used in Japan for centuries as a seasoning ingredient, but has recently enjoyed a real resurgence due to the increased interest in the health benefits of fermented foods.

The mould contained in shio koji breaks down proteins to create glutamic acid and consequently umami flavours, a process that at the same time tenderizes meat and fish. The same mould also converts starches into glucose, drawing out the sweetness from ingredients and helping foods to brown more easily. Because of this catalytic process, shio koji brings out a much wider range of flavours than plain salt can. To use shio koji in place of salt, just substitute two teaspoons of shio koji for every teaspoon of salt.

I give instructions for How To Make Shio Koji on page 244 and introduce it in a simple recipe for Cucumber with Shio Koji and Black Sesame Seeds (see page 75). Here the shio koji cures and flavours the cucumber, making for an effortless and refreshing pickled cucumber dish. Shio koji is also used as the main marinade ingredient for my 48-hour Shio Koji Roast Chicken (see page 80) – a juicy, tender roast chicken with crispy skin I hope you will try at home.

Shoyu (Soy Sauce) Koji

Shoyu koji is a mixture of rice inoculated with koji and fermented with soy sauce over a period of at least a month. Due to the addition of soy sauce, shoyu koji is dark brown in colour, but works in exactly the same way as shio koji. Shio koji is, however, more widely used than shoyu koji.

Ready-made shio and shoyu koji look like rice porridge; they are very salty but with a slightly sweet flavour and fermented aroma. They are sold most commonly as a creamy sauce or paste that is ready to be used. If they are chunky with visible pieces of rice, you can purée them in a blender until completely smooth before using.

Known to be an all-purpose seasoning, both shio and shoyu koji can be poured onto meat or

fish as a simple but effective marinade, or used as a base for sauces, salad dressings and pickles. As a seasoning, the amount of shio or shoyu koji needed depends on the weight of the main ingredient – the recommended ratio is 10:1 (100g/3½oz) of food to 10g/¼oz) of shio or shoyu koji), though if like me you like your food a tad saltier, you can add more.

Because of the converted sugars, shio and shoyu koji seasoned foods can colour very quickly with high-heat grilling (broiling) or roasting, especially with meats, so avoid these cooking methods when using this ingredient or use foil to protect the food.

You can make Shoyu Koji from scratch (see page 244) and use it as the base ingredient for the dressing in my Oven-Roasted Beef Picanha in Shoyu Koji, Lime and Garlic Dressing (see page 82).

Ama (Sweet) Koji

Ama koji is malted rice fermented with rice porridge. The enzymes in the rice koji will convert the starches in the rice into glucose making it sweet. Mochi gome (Japanese short-grain glutinous rice) is rich in starch and will make for the sweetest ama koji. Plain short-grain rice is also used for a less sweet variety. You can make your own ama koji at home (see page 244).

Ama koji is a great seasoning for fish and vegetables, imparting both umami and sweetness. It is the base ingredient to make the traditional Japanese beverage Amazake (sweet sake), a recipe I share on page 241.

Sake Kasu (Sake Lees)

A by-product of the sake-making process, sake kasu is the lees left behind after the liquid is extracted from the fermented rice. Sake kasu is packed with koji mould, fibre and umami-enhancing compounds, making it ideal for cooking. It comes vacuum-packed and refrigerated or frozen and can be found at most Japanese grocers or online.

Like shio koji, discussed earlier, sake kasu is also widely used as a base for curing or pickling fish, meat or vegetables to make kasuzuke (food marinated

or pickled in sake kasu). Kasuzuke is as widespread as miso-cured foods known as misozuke in Japan, though the latter has been more heavily popularized in the West by the likes of Nobu.

In this book, I include recipes for Kasuzuke and Misozuke marinades and explain how you can use them for curing and pickling fish, meat and vegetables (see page 74). These marinades impart depth of flavour to the ingredients they are used with, as well as tenderizing them. I hope you will try them as two additional curing and pickling options in your everyday cooking. My recipe for Miso and Satsuma Marinated Salmon (see page 26) is a straightforward and delicious example of how to use Misozuke marinade with grilled (broiled) fish.

Besides marinating, another popular use of sake kasu is kasujiru or kasu soup, and personally this is my favourite way of eating the ingredient. Sake kasu adds an incredible depth of flavour and creaminess to soups, particularly miso soup. I use sake kasu in my recipe for Tonjiru or Hearty Miso Soup (see page 84), a rich miso soup with pork belly, root vegetables and sake kasu. Amazake (see page 241), a sweet, thick, hot low-alcohol drink rather like eggnog, is another great way to use sake kasu.

Natto (Fermented Soybeans)

It is sticky, smelly and slimy – to say that non-Japanese would find natto a bit of an acquired taste is an understatement. I was in two minds whether to include natto in this book and what reception it would have, but no Japanese ingredient book would be complete without it. Natto is fermented soybeans and is touted to be one of Japan's healthiest foods.

Natto is made by adding beneficial bacteria, *Bacillus natto*, to soybeans and letting them ferment. This fermentation process greatly enhances the nutritional value of the soybeans and develops a great flavour and natto's unique goeey texture.

Natto is usually sold in small, sealed polystyrene packs along with tiny sachets of Japanese karashi mustard or wasabi, and another of dashi-infused soy sauce. All you need to do is mix these ingredients

together with your chopsticks, and the natto is then ready to eat. Outside Japan, natto is mainly found in the freezer compartment of Japanese grocery stores. If frozen, it will need to be defrosted before consumption.

The Japanese love to eat natto for breakfast, over a bowl of steaming short-grain rice, and lightly seasoned with soy sauce, Karashi mustard or wasabi and sometimes with a raw egg yolk and chopped spring onions (scallions). This is the most popular way of eating natto in Japan.

I would love to convert you to natto and if you can get past its funky smell and stickiness, you will be rewarded. To get you started, I have included it as one of the suggested fillings in my Onigirazu Rice Sandwiches (see page 86). If you do get a taste for it, why not try natto with pasta, butter and soy sauce, or with stir-fried rice or over steamed short-grain white rice or silken tofu?

Gyosho (Fish Sauce)

Fish sauce is mostly associated with the cuisines of other Asian countries such as Thailand and Vietnam, but in Japan there are several Japanese varieties known generically as gyosho. These are not as prevalent as soy sauce, Japan's most used seasoning, but their popularity is gaining momentum with some Japanese fish sauce brands winning a number of international food awards.

The most widely available gyosho in Japan is called ishiri (or ishiru). It is made from fermented squid intestines, sardines or anchovies. Another well-known gyosho is shotssuru, made from sandfish, small sardines and anchovies; it can be aged for up to 10 years and is highly prized. Ikanago is the third major variety, though it is still not a very commonly used ingredient even in Japan. All these Japanese varieties of fish sauce are often reserved for the preparation of nabemono (hotpot) or as a final touch added to dishes.

Gyosho or Japanese fish sauce is still relatively hard to find in Japan beyond these three main production areas, and it is currently not available outside Japan.

PRESERVED INGREDIENTS

Mentaiko (Cured Chillied Cod or Pollock Roe)

Karashi mentaiko (spicy mentaiko) is cod or pollock roe slowly cured in salt, red chilli pepper, konbu and sake. Mentaiko has its origins on the Korean Peninsula when fishermen began eating salt-preserved fish eggs with chilli in the 17th century.

Today, mentaiko is consumed throughout Japan. The best mentaiko in Japan comes from the southwestern-most island of Kyushu, and especially from its capital, Fukuoka.

Surprisingly non-fishy, mentaiko is packed with the flavours of the sea; it is salty, rich and spicy. When cooked encased in the sac membrane, the roe becomes concentrated and thick, almost paste-like in texture. When consumed raw, the tiny eggs create a sauce-like consistency.

Mentaiko is not to be confused with tarako, which is plain, salted sacs of pollock or cod roe. Tarako is typically sold raw, and is usually identified by its beige colour with light pink undertones.

In Japanese cooking, mentaiko is a popular ingredient crumbled over plain white rice for breakfast or inside onigiri rice balls enjoyed throughout the day as a snack. It also appears as a topping for hakata ramen noodles, pasta and potato salad, and even wrapped up in shiso leaves and deep-fried for tempura, or as an ingredient in sushi. Indeed it is so popular that there is a national Mentaiko Day on January 10th each year.

Outside Japan, there are a number of different ways to enjoy mentaiko – it goes beautifully in oven-baked Mac and Cheese, on crackers with cream cheese, black pepper and lemon juice, or mixed with butter or mayonnaise and spread over French baguette. I also love adding mentaiko to creamy fish sauces for an added layer of complexity and flavour.

In this chapter, I have included my favourite mentaiko recipe: with a creamy sauce combining



YAMATO SOY SAUCE & MISO CO., LTD, KANAZAWA

On the northern coast of Japan, the busy port city of Kanazawa is renowned for its fish and seafood, its wild seas and tough winters. Here I met husband and wife team Seiichi and Yukiko Yamamoto, the owners of Yamato Soy Sauce & Miso Co., Ltd. Yamato has been blending soybeans and wheat with koji mould, salt and water, a mixture known as moromi, to make its award-winning soy sauces for over 100 years. Yamamoto explained: 'Our moromi is allowed to ferment and age for about a year, before being pressed to make soy sauce. Only naturally brewed, high-quality moromi, aged without haste, can create the fine aroma and subtle flavour we strive for.'

Yamato is noted for its exquisite raw (unpasteurized) soy sauce as well as its sweet soy sauce which I enjoyed over their signature soy-sauce soft serve ice cream. Strange though it may sound, this was an umami-rich and rather addictive combination reminiscent of vanilla and salted caramel.

Yamato Soy Sauce & Miso Co., Ltd is located within a larger complex known as Yamato Koji Park. A mecca for all discerning foodies, the park houses the soy sauce and miso store and factory, a cooking studio where visitors can have miso cooking demonstrations and tastings, as well as a wonderful restaurant serving solely koji-fermented foods, with a different menu each month. I had a marvellous lunch here and highly recommend it, although reservation is essential.

the chilled roe, Japanese mayonnaise, egg yolks and soy sauce, Mentaiko Spaghetti (see page 76) is like a Japanese-style carbonara.

Kamaboko (Japanese Fishcake)

Kamaboko or Japanese fishcake, is a popular ingredient used in a number of dishes from ramen and udon noodles to hotpots and even deep-fried as tempura. Kamaboko is made from skinless and boneless white fish, which is ground and seasoned to form a paste known as surimi. This is then turned into a block and either steamed, grilled (broiled), fried or boiled. Each cooking method yields a slightly different type of kamaboko. Like mentaiko, kamaboko is regarded a Japanese culinary treasure and has its own National Kamaboko Day, celebrated on November 15th each year.

Kamaboko comes in all shapes, sizes and colours depending on the region it comes from, the fish and cooking methods used to make it. No one makes kamaboko at home in Japan these days, as good-quality varieties are readily available pre-made at grocery stores.

The most traditional and popular kamaboko is the semi-cylinder shaped aka kamaboko, with a pink outer layer and white inside. Another popular type is naruto kamaboko, famous for its striking pink and white swirl. Chikuwa kamaboko is a long cylindrical tube, hollow on the inside. It is a grilled (broiled) fishcake with a lovely toasty flavour and is popular in hotpots, as tempura or in stir-fries.

Satsuma-age kamaboko is deep-fried fishcake made with added ingredients such as vegetables or different types of seafood in addition to white fish. Great on its own, it is also delicious as a garnish for udon noodles or as a stir-fry ingredient.

Outside Japan, the best-known of these is kani kamaboko or imitation crabsticks. Good-quality kani kamaboko is a type of steamed fishcake made from white fish but seasoned with the liquid of crabs. It is ubiquitous as an ingredient in California sushi rolls.

Kamaboko is one of the very few ingredients that copes well with freezing. I always have kamaboko in my freezer and use it often as a quick

replacement for fish or meat in stir-fries and soups or enjoyed simply on its own as a side dish. In this book I introduce kamaboko in a number of dishes including Wok-Fried Green Beans and Chikuwa Fishcakes in Spicy Japanese Mayo Sauce (see page 122), and Kakiage – a Trio of Japanese-style Vegetable and Seafood Fritters (see page 192).

Tsukemono (Pickles)

I could write an entire book on Japanese pickles, such is their importance in the national cuisine. In fact so integral are they that you might say rice and pickles are to the Japanese the equivalent of bread and cheese to the British or Americans.

When striving for a balanced Japanese (Washoku) meal, cooks will try to incorporate the five basic flavours as well as five different colours, cooking methods and textures. This is referred to as the Washoku Five Principles. The sourness of pickles brings a desirable flavour difficult to find in other foods, as well as a crunchy texture and a refreshing, palate-cleansing mouthfeel.

Various types of Japanese tsukemono pickles.



There is a seemingly endless variety of pickles in Japan depending on the ingredients and methods of pickling used and the places they are made. Salt (shio) and vinegar (su) are only two of dozens of ingredients used for pickling, which you can see in Making Pickles Using Rice Vinegar, Salt and Sugar on page 72.

Another great pickling agent is shio koji, used in my recipe for Cucumber with Shio Koji and Black Sesame Seeds (see page 75). Miso and sake kasu (sake lees) also lend themselves wonderfully to pickling: see Making Pickles Using Sake Lees and Miso – Kasuzuke and Misozuke Pickling on page 74.

Though not covered in this book, the other popular pickling agent is nuka – the bran left over from Japanese rice as it is polished for cooking, sake making and other uses.

Beni shoga, or red pickled ginger, is one of the most popular types of tsukemono – the bright red ginger strands add refreshing acidity, sweetness and a little spice heat to many dishes. I use beni shoga in a number of recipes including Soboro Gohan (see page 148) and Onigirazu Rice Sandwiches (see page 86).

Of the thousands of different Japanese pickles, the only fruit is the umeboshi or pickled plum (actually a species of apricot), which almost stands in a pickling category of its own. They are often seen in bento boxes in Japan where a single umeboshi is placed in the centre of the rice; they are called Hinomaru bento, after Japan's national flag. Unripe plums are heavily salted and pickled usually with red shiso (perilla) leaves for at least three days and up to a year before being dried. The fermentation produces vinegar, turning the plums very sour, tinged with red (if red perilla leaves are used), and very soft.

Umeboshi is widely used in Japanese cooking, and here I use it in my recipe for Crispy Duck and Glass Noodle Salad in Umeboshi Dressing on page 162. Umeboshi can also come as a paste and is sold in tubes or bottles. It is a handy ingredient to have in your fridge to whip up a zingy salad dressing in no time.

DRIED INGREDIENTS

Flours

Rice Flour

There are three types of Japanese rice flour: joshinko is made from ordinary short-grain rice, while shiratamako and mochiko are made from glutinous short-grain rice. All three are mainly used for Japanese confectionery, though mochiko is also used as a thickener and for mochi.

Shiratamako is a highly prized artisanal product, and despite its rather granular texture is perfect for creating very smooth and refined confectionery. Mochiko is finely powdered glutinous rice flour. It is less expensive than shiratamako, but is also less elastic and gives a grainier texture in confectionery. You can use glutinous rice flours from other countries as a substitute, but they will be made from less starchy long-grain rice and so will impart a different texture and flavour to the finished dish.

In this book, you can experiment with mochiko or shiratamako flour in my recipe for Japanese Mochi Cheesebreads (see page 94).

Potato Starch – Katakuriko

In Japanese cooking, katakuriko is mainly used as a coating for fried foods, to help make them crispier. It is also a tasteless thickener, which like cornflour (cornstarch), must be dissolved in a small amount

A: AONORI	G: PANKO
B: KIZAMI NORI	BREADCRUMBS
C: KAISO SALAD	H: ADZUKI BEANS
D: HIJIKI	I: MOCHIKO
E: BLACK AND WHITE SESAME SEEDS	J: SHIRATAMAKO
F: KINAKO	K: WAKAME
	L: NORI SHEET



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of water before using. It is stronger than cornflour (cornstarch), so less of it is required if using it as a thickener. Katakuriko can be used in place of cornflour (cornstarch) throughout this book, or as a coating for the ingredients in various recipes including Daikon (White Radish) Fries, Garlic and Soy Sauce (see page 206) and Wasabi Prawns (Shrimp) (see page 112).

Roasted Soybean Flour – Kinako

Made by grinding roasted soybeans, kinako is a nutty and fragrant flour reminiscent of ground peanut flour, so it is a great substitute for those with the nut allergy. I find it gives a uniquely toasty flavour when used as a component in batters for baked goods such as biscuits (cookies), cakes and waffles, or in ice cream, smoothies and shakes. In this book I use kinako in my recipe for Banana and Kinako Doughnuts (see page 96).

Tempura Flour – Tempura Batter Mix or Tempurako

Tempurako is the ideal flour for making deep-fried tempura and kakiage (tempura fritters). It is primarily a mixture of wheat flour and potato starch, baking powder and powdered egg, and because of this it is sometimes referred to as tempura batter mix. It is very convenient to use at home as nothing else (apart from chilled water) is required in order to make tempura batter.

I give full instructions on How To Make Tempura At Home on page 188, using either tempura flour or plain wheat flour and eggs. Either batter can be used to coat ingredients to make crisp Japanese tempura or kakiage fritters as in the recipes for Kabocha Pumpkin Skin, Onion and Chorizo Fritters (see page 196) or Kakiage – A Trio of Japanese-style Vegetable and Seafood Fritters (see page 192).

Kaiso (Seaweed)

Seaweed is one of the key dried ingredients of Japanese cooking, and the general term for all types of seaweed is kaiso, which includes types as diverse as konbu, agar agar, nori, hijiki and wakame.



Shiratamako (left) and Mochiko (right) rice flours.

Konbu

There are over 40 different varieties of konbu in Japan with most types found in the northern island of Hokkaido. Alongside dried bonito and water, konbu is the third in the holy trinity of ingredients that yields the majestic umami flavours of dashi stock. I have written about konbu in more detail in Chapter I, including a recipe for Primary Dashi (see page 20) and vegetarian Konbu Dashi (see page 22).

Kanten (Agar Agar)

Kanten or agar agar is a pure form of gelatin made from the red tengusa seaweed. In Japanese cooking, it is used generally for sweets and confectionery in the same manner as conventional gelatin although its qualities are different. As a jelling agent, kanten will set at around 40°C (104°F) and only melt at 82°C (179°F). The resulting texture is firmer and more delicate than gelatin but without gelatin's rubberiness. It is a great alternative to animal-based jelling agents.

Nori and Aonori

Nori seaweed, also known as laver, is a sheet of dried marine algae. Billions of sheets of nori are consumed around the world every year as a wrap for sushi rolls or for onigiri rice balls. Nori can also be crumbled or cut into very thin strips, known as kizami nori, and used as a garnish on many dishes.

Nori sheets come in a standard 20.5 x 17.5cm (8 x 7 inch) size and must be lightly toasted just before using. To do this, hold a sheet and pass one

of the sides over a gas flame a few times until it becomes crisp. This greatly improves the texture and flavour of nori. Nori may come already toasted (yaki-nori) or seasoned with soy sauce (ajitsuke nori). Nori is also sold in smaller sizes about 5–10cm (2–4 inches) long, these are usually seasoned with soy sauce and used for wrapping hot rice at breakfast. I use nori seaweed in my Onigirazu Rice Sandwiches (see page 86).

Aonori is a type of green nori seaweed that has been finely crumbled and resembles dried oregano. It is an important ingredient as a topping in dishes including Okonomiyaki Osaka-Style (see page 208) and Goya Champuru (see page 194).

Wakame

A dark green seaweed, wakame has a mild flavour of the sea, and is most commonly used in soups. It is very nutritious and has zero calories, although it should not be cooked too vigorously or for too long to avoid it losing some of its nutritional value. Due to its texture and flavour, it goes very well in salads with vinegar- or citrus-based dressings.

Wakame seaweed imparts an extra layer of flavour to the accompanying garnish in the recipe for Marmite Chicken with Sweet Cucumber and Wakame Pickle on page 44.

Kaiso Salad Mix

This is, as the name suggests, a mix of various types of seaweed with different colours, sizes and textures. It is a great addition to salads or as a garnish. I use Kaiso Salad Mix as one of the main ingredients in the Crispy Duck and Glass Noodle Salad in Umeboshi Dressing (see page 162).

Goma (Sesame Seeds)

Both white and black sesame seeds are used extensively in Japanese cuisine. They are sold pre-toasted, both whole and ground, as well as in oil (goma abura) and paste (neri goma) forms.

The flavour of sesame seeds is improved by light dry-frying in a pan until just golden. Black sesame seeds are somewhat stronger in flavour and

aroma than white, and are used to sprinkle over light coloured dishes (such as white rice) for decoration. In Japan, cooks will grind their own seeds using a suribachi (a Japanese pestle and mortar) to make the popular Gomadare or Classic Sesame Dressing (see page 250). Grinding your own sesame seeds means that you can choose how fine or coarse you would like your dressing to be. Freshly ground sesame seeds release their oil as they are crushed and impart a great aroma and nuttiness to the food.

When buying the oil (goma aburi) make sure it is 100 per cent toasted sesame oil, and not a blend. Sesame oil does not withstand high temperatures, so avoid using it on a high flame. It is primarily used as a finishing touch on most dishes or in cold dressings or sauces.

Sesame paste (neri goma) is used in many dishes in Japan to make sauces and dressings. It is similar to shop-bought tahini (sesame seed paste) in appearance and texture but there are two main differences. Neri goma is made from toasted sesame seeds and so has a stronger nutty flavour than tahini (sesame seed paste). Secondly, and more importantly, neri goma is made from unhulled sesame seeds (whole sesame seeds), and so they retain their nutritional value.

Both white and black sesame seeds as well as toasted sesame oil are used throughout this book.

Adzuki Beans

Besides soybean, the small red adzuki bean is the pulse you will most often encounter in Japanese cooking. They are commonly boiled with sugar to make anko, the Japanese sweet red bean paste used in many confectioneries in Japan. Anko comes in two different textures: tsubu-an (chunky with partially crushed bean) or koshi-an (completely smooth). You can buy good-quality, canned ready-made anko from Japanese grocery stores or online, or make your own at home by following my Anko recipe on page 98. Anko is a great flavouring for red bean ice cream or fillings for cakes and pastries. Or why not try the recipe for Sweet Red Bean and Ricotta Swirl Rolls (see page 98) filled with anko.

HOW TO MAKE JAPANESE PICKLES

MAKING PICKLES USING RICE VINEGAR, SALT AND SUGAR

One of the most important elements in a Japanese meal, tsukemono (pickled things) offer both colour and texture. They cleanse the palate and provide refreshing acidity to balance the flavours of other dishes.

In their simplest form, tsukemono are made out of vegetables using salt, brine or rice bran. Here, we make a simple and quick tsukemono of cabbage, cucumber and carrots using salt, rice vinegar and sugar.

Different techniques and ingredients can be used for pickling – miso and sake lees are two such ingredients. Miso-pickled (misozuke) salmon and eggs are very popular as are vegetables and fish pickled in sake lees (sakezuke).



TSUKEMONO (PICKLED VEG)

MAKES 400ML (13½ FL OZ/1⅓ CUPS) OF PICKLING LIQUID

500ml (18fl oz/2 cups) rice vinegar
500ml (18fl oz/2 cups) water
400g (14oz/1¾ cups) granulated sugar
1 large cucumber, thinly sliced
½ Savoy cabbage, cut into bite-sized squares
1 carrot, finely sliced
2 tsp fine sea salt
1–2 large red chillies, thinly sliced
1 tbsp red pickled ginger (Japanese beni shoga),
or use fresh ginger, peeled and julienned

1. Combine the vinegar, measured water and sugar in a medium pan and bring to the boil over a high heat. Remove from the heat and let it cool down for 1 hour. Meanwhile, prepare all the vegetables, keeping them separate.
2. In a colander, mix the cucumber, cabbage and carrots together, sprinkle the salt over the vegetables and rub it over them until they are completely covered. Place a plate with a weight on top over the vegetables and leave for a couple of hours. (I place the colander over a sink or large bowl as the vegetables will release a lot of water.) When the time is up, squeeze as much water out of the vegetables as possible, but do not rinse them.
3. Add the vegetables, chillies and pickled ginger to the cooled rice vinegar mix. Let them pickle in this mixture for at least a couple of hours before using.
4. You can store the pickles in the refrigerator in an airtight, sealable container for up to 1 month.

Top: shio koji pickled cucumber; salmon miso.

Middle: rice vinegar, salt and sugar; eggs miso.

Bottom: sake lees pickled vegetables.



MAKING PICKLES USING SAKE LEES AND MISO - KASUZUKE AND MISOZUKE PICKLING

Different techniques and ingredients can be used for pickling – miso and sake lees are two such ingredients. Miso-pickled (misozuke) salmon and eggs are very popular, as are vegetables and fish pickled in sake lees (kasuzuke).

KASUZUKE MARINADE

MAKES 300ML (10FL OZ/1¼ CUPS)

100g (3½oz) sake kasu
100ml (3½fl oz/½ cup) fresh water
50g (1¾oz/¼ cup) caster (superfine) sugar
50ml (1¾oz/¼ cup) mirin or sake

1. To soften the sake kasu, chop it into small pieces, add the measured water and mix well.
2. To make the marinade, mix the softened sake kasu with a quarter of its total weight in sugar, plus an equal quarter measure of sake or mirin. Mix well until completely combined to form a thick paste. The marinade is ready to be used.



How to Use Kasuzuke Marinade with Meat and Fish

To make fish or meat kasuzuke, salt the fillets lightly and cover them liberally on both sides with the sake kasu marinade. Place the fillets in an airtight container and let them marinate for at least a day and up to a week in the fridge.

To cook, wipe off the excess marinade from the surface of the fish or meat, and grill (broil) or gently pan-fry. The marinade imparts a wonderful sweet-savoury flavour and aroma as well as a golden colour. Mixing a little miso into the sake kasu marinade imparts an even more complex, umami-bursting flavour.

How to Use Kasuzuke Marinade with Vegetables

Vegetable kasuzuke are not cooked after pickling. Traditionally, firm vegetables such as daikon (white radish) and winter melon are the preferred options, but any vegetables can be used.

Peel the vegetables if they have a tough rind, and remove the seeds. Salt the vegetables quite liberally and pack them completely in the sake kasu marinade. Leave in an airtight container in the fridge for at least a week, although vegetable kasuzuke makers in Japan will marinate theirs for at least a month. In Nara Prefecture, near Kyoto, narazuke is winter melon that has been salted heavily and marinated for at least 18 months in sake kasu. It has been a specialty of the ancient former capital of Japan for at least 1,000 years, so if you get to visit the area, look out for it.

To eat, wipe or wash off the excess marinade from the vegetable and slice. Serve as a side to accompany grilled (broiled) meats or fish.

MISOZUKE MARINADE

MAKES 250ML (8½FL OZ/1 CUP)

200g (7oz/¾ cup) white or brown miso
50ml (2fl oz/¼ cup) mirin
1 tbsp caster (superfine) sugar
1 tsp soy sauce
splash of sake or water, if required



1. Mix all the ingredients together in a bowl to form a thick paste. If the marinade is too thick add a splash of sake or water to loosen it slightly. The marinade is ready to be used.

How to Use Misozuke Marinade with Meat and Fish

Unlike kasuzuke foods, meat, fish and most vegetables do not require pre-salting prior to marinating as the majority of miso pastes have a high salt content.

Fish and meat can be marinated for a few hours and usually up to 48 hours before being cooked. I also love pickling whole soft-boiled eggs in misozuke marinade for up to a couple of days – they are wonderful.

How to Use Misozuke Marinade with Vegetables

For vegetables, marinating time will vary according to the type and hardness of the vegetables used. Watery vegetables, such as cucumbers and daikon (white radish), should first be lightly tossed with salt and left for 1 hour to drain off excess moisture. Rinse and pat completely dry before continuing.

Vegetables can be marinated whole or cut into thick slices or chunks, the latter option will impart more of the marinating flavour and is a quicker method too.

Some of my favourite vegetables for misozuke are daikon (white radish), kabocha pumpkin, carrots, garlic, cucumber, cauliflower and whole white cabbage leaves.

To make misozuke vegetables, submerge the vegetables in the misozuke marinade, but only use enough vegetables that can be covered in a thick layer of the marinade. Let them sit at room temperature for at least a day and up to four or five days, or leave in the fridge for at least one week and up to four weeks. Again, this will depend on the type of vegetable used, try a slice after a day or two, and let them marinate until you feel they are just right for you. Wipe or rinse off the misozuke marinade before eating.

The misozuke marinade used for vegetables can be reused many times, just keep it refrigerated in an airtight container.

CUCUMBER WITH SHIO KOJI AND BLACK SESAME SEEDS

MAKES ABOUT 1 LITRE (1¾ PINTS/4 CUPS)

- 1 large cucumber (about 400g/14oz)
- 150g (5½oz) shio koji (salted rice malt)
- 1 tsp toasted black sesame seeds

1. Wash and cut the cucumber in half lengthways, then cut again lengthways into quarters. Run a knife along the inner part of each cucumber quarter to remove most of its seeds. Cut the cucumber into 1-cm (½-inch) thick diagonal slices.

2. Place the cucumber slices into a sealable bag, add the shio koji and seal the bag completely, squeezing as much air out as possible. Lightly massage the cucumber slices in the shio koji. Place the bag in a bowl (to avoid leakage as the cucumber will eliminate water) and leave in the fridge for at least 6 hours, but no longer than 12 hours.

3. Just before serving, pour the cucumber slices into a colander to drain off the water and excess shio koji, but do not wash it off. Transfer to a serving bowl and sprinkle with the toasted black sesame seeds. Serve.

明太子 スパゲッティ

SERVES 8 AS A STARTER

For the mentaiko sauce

125g (4½oz) mentaiko (chilli spiced cod or pollock roe)
4 tbsp Japanese mayonnaise
1 egg yolk
3 tbsp soy sauce
2 tbsp mirin

For the pasta

400g (14oz) dried spaghetti
2 tbsp sunflower oil
30g (1¼oz/2 tbsp) butter
20g (¾oz) black tobiko caviar (flying-fish roe) (available from Japanese grocery stores)
shichimi pepper or roughly crushed chilli (dried red pepper) flakes, to taste

To garnish

kizami nori (shredded nori) or 1 sheet of nori seaweed for sushi, torn up into small pieces

MENTAIKO SPAGHETTI

Spaghetti with Chilli Marinated Cod Roe and Black Tobiko Caviar

KARASHI MENTAIKO | SOY SAUCE | MIRIN | JAPANESE MAYONNAISE | BLACK TOBIKO CAVIAR | KIZAMI NORI | SHICHIMI PEPPER | SESAME SEEDS

Often referred to as the Japanese carbonara, Mentaiko Spaghetti is a brilliant way of using karashi mentaiko or spiced cod roe in everyday cooking. Surprisingly non-fishy, it is creamy and has great umami flavour from the roe, soy sauce and mirin. Mentaiko Spaghetti is a favourite at all my Japanese and Nikkei supper club events.

1. Start by preparing the pasta sauce, which can be made hours ahead. Squeeze the mentaiko roe into a very large bowl and add the mayonnaise, egg yolk, soy sauce and mirin. Mix well with a balloon whisk. If you are making the sauce ahead of time, cover the bowl and refrigerate. Take the sauce out of the fridge an hour before needed so it returns to room temperature, and mix well before using.
2. Bring a large pan of salted boiling water to the boil and cook the spaghetti until al dente according to the packet instructions, then drain.
3. In a large pan, heat the sunflower oil and butter together, then quickly fry the drained pasta for about 30 seconds, tossing it in the butter and oil.
4. Transfer the fried pasta into the bowl containing the mentaiko sauce and mix very well. Add the black tobiko caviar, season with a little shichimi pepper or chilli (dried red pepper) flakes and mix again until well combined with the sauce and pasta.
5. Divide the pasta and sauce between 8 dishes, sprinkle a little more shichimi pepper or chilli (dried red pepper) flakes over it, top with the Kizami nori and serve immediately.



SEARED TUNA WITH SESAME PONZU DRESSING

and Crispy Green Salad

SERVES 4

1 quantity of Sesame Ponzu Sauce (see page 248)
600g (1lb 5oz) sushi-grade tuna
1 tbsp sunflower oil
100g (3½oz) mixed green salad leaves, washed and cut into bite-sized pieces
generous sprinkle of toasted white sesame seeds

SESAME PONZU SAUCE (LIGHT SOY SAUCE, MIRIN, DASHI, RICE VINEGAR, SESAME OIL AND SEEDS)

This is one of the simplest and yet tastiest recipes in this book! Everything from the Sesame Ponzu Sauce to searing the tuna must be done in advance, making it a perfect and elegant dish that will wow your guests with very little effort. The tuna must be super-fresh and seared for only a few seconds on each side. Do not place it in the fridge; it should be served at room temperature. This may become a summer staple in your home, the only other thing you need is a chilled glass of white wine to go with it!

1. Make the Sesame Ponzu Sauce (see page 248) and place it in a container just large enough to fit the tuna blocks snugly. Chill the Sesame Ponzu Sauce in the fridge or freezer – it must be very cold before being used.
2. Cut the tuna into 4 even blocks, each about 2.5cm (1 inch) thick.
3. Heat a non-stick frying pan (skillet) until very hot. Brush the sunflower oil onto the tuna blocks and sear the tuna on all sides for about 10 seconds on each side – do not overcook the tuna.
4. Remove the Sesame Ponzu Sauce from the fridge or freezer and dunk the seared blocks of tuna into the cold sauce to stop them from cooking. Let the tuna marinate in this sauce for at least 30 minutes and ideally up to 1 hour, at room temperature.
5. Before serving, slice the tuna into 5-mm (¼-inch) thick slices and arrange them on individual serving dishes with the green salad (seasoned with the sesame sauce). Spoon some of the Sesame Ponzu Sauce over the tuna slices, sprinkle with the toasted white sesame seeds and serve.



48-HOUR SHIO KOJI ROAST CHICKEN

SERVES 4

- 175g (6¼oz) Shio Koji (see page 244), or buy ready-made shio/salt koji (available from Japanese grocery stores or online), blended until completely smooth
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed
- 1 tsp sansho pepper or another dry spice or herb of your choice
- 1 whole, good-quality corn-fed chicken (approximately 1.75kg/4lb)

SHIO KOJI | SANSHO PEPPER

Shio koji is a condiment made from salt (shio), water and rice malted with koji kin, a type of Japanese mould. The mould breaks down proteins to create glutamic acid and consequently umami flavours, a process that also tenderizes meat and fish. The same mould also converts starches into glucose, drawing out the sweetness from ingredients and helping foods to brown more easily. Because of this catalytic process, shio koji brings out a much wider range of flavours than plain salt can. For best results, marinate the chicken for the entire 48 hours, cover it with foil and keep an eye on it to avoid over-browning during cooking.

1. If making your own Shio Koji (see page 244), start making it at least 7 days before attempting this recipe.
2. Crush the garlic cloves and mix well with the sansho pepper and the smooth Shio Koji to make a paste.
3. Untie any strings attached to the chicken to allow the heat to circulate more evenly during cooking. Rub the entire chicken with the garlic and shio koji paste. Lift the skin at the top of the neck and rub it onto the chicken breast and under the skin, working as far down as you can. Place the chicken in a roasting tin (pan), breast side up, loosely covered with foil, then transfer to the fridge and let it marinate for 48 hours.
4. Preheat the oven to 180°C/350°F/gas mark 4. Take the chicken out of the fridge 30 minutes before cooking to bring it to room temperature. Transfer to the preheated oven and roast for 1 hour and 20 minutes covered with foil (40 minutes per kilo plus 15 minutes). Turn the chicken occasionally to cook it evenly and keep an eye on it as koji-marinated meats tend to brown very quickly. If this is the case, lower the heat and roast the chicken for a little longer until cooked. Remove the foil 10–15 minutes before taking the chicken out of the oven for a crispy and golden skin.
5. Pierce the thickest part of the thigh with a skewer and let the juices run out. If they are clear, then it is cooked, but if they still look pink, return to the oven for a further 10 minutes, then test again. If you have a meat thermometer, push the probe into the thickest part of the thigh. The temperature should be 75°C (165°F) for cooked chicken.
6. Lift the chicken and drain its juices from the cavity into the roasting tin (pan). Transfer the chicken to a carving board, cover it with foil to keep it warm and let it rest for 10 minutes. Carve the chicken and serve immediately.



SERVES 12

For the picanha

1.2kg (2lb 10oz) Brazilian beef picanha, whole piece
150g (5½oz/1 cup) rock salt (do not use table or cooking salt or sea salt flakes)

For the shoyu koji, lime and garlic dressing

120ml (4fl oz/½ cup) Shoyu Koji (see page 244), or buy ready-made from Japanese grocers or online, blended until smooth
60ml (2fl oz/¼ cup) extra virgin olive oil
60ml (2fl oz/¼ cup) lime juice
60ml (2fl oz/¼ cup) tamari soy sauce
6 garlic cloves, crushed
1 red chilli, deseeded and finely diced

To garnish

sunflower oil, for deep-frying
2 onions (approximately 300g/10½oz), peeled and sliced lengthways
50g (1¾oz/⅓ cup) cornflour (cornstarch)
fine sea salt
15g (½oz/⅓ cup) micro coriander (micro cilantro)
15g (½oz/⅓ cup) micro red amaranth or edible flowers
1 tbsp toasted white sesame seeds
Maldon sea salt flakes, to taste

OVEN-ROASTED BEEF PICANHA

in Shoyu Koji, Lime and Garlic Dressing

SHOYU KOJI | SOY SAUCE | SESAME SEEDS

Soy sauce and beef is a combination that I really cannot get enough of, as you can see in Chapter 1, but shoyu koji and beef take it to the next level! Picanha is relatively unknown outside South America, but is one of my favourite cuts of beef as it is super tender and juicy.

1. If you are making the Shoyu Koji (see page 244), you should make this at least 1 month in advance.
2. Preheat the oven to 220°C/425°F/gas mark 7. Preheat the oven grill (broiler).
3. Heat enough sunflower oil in a medium-sized pan to deep-fry the onions to 160°C (320°F). Place a quarter of the sliced onions in a bowl, add 1 tbsp of cornflour (cornstarch) and mix well to coat the slices. Carefully lower into the hot oil and fry for a few minutes until lightly golden, then drain on kitchen paper (paper towel). They will not be crispy, but will crisp up when they are re-fried. Fry the rest of the onion in batches, then set aside, but keep the oil hot.
4. Make the shoyu koji, lime and garlic dressing by mixing together all the dressing ingredients.
5. Cut the whole picanha into 6 pieces, each about 200g (7oz) and 5cm (2 inches) thick, keeping the fat on the upper surface of the meat. Place the picanha pieces over a rack within a roasting tin (pan), so that the fat will drip into the tin (pan). Rub generously in the rock salt and roast in the preheated oven for 10 minutes flesh side up. Remove the tray from the oven, turn the picanha pieces over and place on a lower rack under the preheated grill (broiler), and grill (broil) for a further 10 minutes.
6. Meanwhile, re-fry the onions at 160°C (320°F), again in batches, then drain on kitchen paper (paper towel). They will only need about 30–60 seconds to gain a deeper golden colour and turn very crispy. Season with fine sea salt.
7. Check how well done the meat is by squeezing it – I use the highly scientific ‘finger poke method’ to know when the meat is done. I like my meat pink (medium-rare), so the picanha should feel bouncy but firm, cooked for about 15–20 minutes in total. Alternatively, slice one picanha through its thickest part to check for doneness. Brush off any excess rock salt from the meat.
8. Using the sharpest knife you have, slice the meat very thinly, ham thickness if you can. Place the slices in a row, preferably on a long rectangular dish, drizzle some of the shoyu koji, lime and garlic dressing over them, and top with the fried onions, micro coriander (micro cilantro), micro red amaranth or edible flowers, white sesame seeds and sea salt flakes. Serve immediately.



豚汁

SERVES 6

250g (9oz) firm tofu
8 shiitake mushrooms, fresh or dehydrated, cut in half
2.4 litres (4 pints/10 cups) Primary Dashi (see page 20), or 2 tbsp instant dashi granules dissolved in 2.4 litres (4 pints/10 cups) of boiling water or the reserved rehydrated shiitake mushroom water, or a combination of them
2 tbsp toasted sesame oil
300g (10½oz) pork belly, cut into 2 x 1cm (¾ x ½ inch) pieces
125g (4½oz) leeks, white part only, cut into 1cm (½ inch) slices
125g (4½oz) carrot, pumpkin or sweet potato, peeled and cut into 2cm (¾ inch) pieces
125g (4½oz) burdock or parsnip, peeled and cut into 2cm (¾ inch) pieces
125g (4½oz) white radish or daikon (white radish), peeled and cut into 2cm (¾ inch) pieces
12 tbsp white miso paste
200g (7oz) sake lees (sake kasu)
1–2 tbsp soy sauce, if necessary, to taste
50g (1¾oz) watercress, cut into 2cm (¾ inch) pieces
2 tbsp finely sliced spring onions (scallions)
shichimi pepper

TONJIRU

Hearty Miso Soup with Pork Belly, Chunky Vegetables and Sake Lees

DASHI | MISO | SAKE KASU | TOFU | BURDOCK | DAIKON (WHITE RADISH) | SHIITAKE MUSHROOMS | SOY SAUCE | SESAME OIL

A winter favourite, Tonjiru is a hearty miso soup made with sliced pork belly and chunky root vegetables. Here, I also use sake kasu, the lees left over from sake making, as it imparts great depth of flavour. Any combination of vegetables will work well in this soup, my favourite is simply carrot and white radish, but you can also use potatoes, pumpkin, Jerusalem artichokes or burdock. There are many variations of tonjiru soup in Japan, and each family will have their own version.

1. First press the tofu. Place it in a colander over a bowl, top with a clean plate or lid and weigh it down using a 1kg (2¼lb) weight for a couple of hours. This will eliminate water, make the tofu firmer and stop it from breaking into smaller pieces in the soup. Cut the pressed tofu into 1cm (½ inch) squares.
2. If using dry shiitake mushrooms, they will need to be rehydrated. To do this, add the shiitake mushrooms to a bowl and cover with warm water and 1 teaspoon of granulated sugar. Leave to rehydrate for 30–60 minutes, squeeze out the water, remove the stem and cut them in half. The mushroom water can be used for making the dashi in this recipe for added flavour.
3. Prepare the Primary Dashi (see page 20), if using.
4. In a large pan, heat the sesame oil and fry the pork belly slices until the meat is whitened and no longer pink, about 2–4 minutes. Add the leek, carrots, burdock, white radish and shiitake mushrooms to the pan along with the Primary Dashi, and bring to the boil. Reduce the heat and gently simmer for 15–20 minutes or until the vegetables are cooked through but still retaining some bite. From time to time, remove any scum that rises to the surface.
5. Transfer a couple of ladles of the dashi liquid into a separate bowl, add the white miso and, using a whisk, stir well until the miso is completely dissolved. Return this mixture to the pan and cook for 1–2 minutes until heated through. Add the sake lees and tofu to the pan and stir well but gently. Cook for a further minute, check for seasoning and adjust by adding more miso or a little soy sauce if necessary.
6. Share out the watercress between 6 individual bowls, pour the hot soup into the bowls, sprinkle some sliced spring onions (scallions) on top, finishing off with a dusting of shichimi pepper before serving.



おにぎらず

MAKES 4 ONIGIRAZU
PIECES

1 quantity of steamed white rice (see page 138)
1 tbsp white sesame seeds
½ quantity of Miso, Tobanjan Chilli and Garlic Sauce (see page 249), (optional)
1 quantity of Pork Soboro (see Soboro Gohan, page 148)
2 tbsp sunflower oil, for frying
4 eggs
75g (2¾oz) mangetout
1 tsp toasted sesame oil
75g (2¼oz) red pickled ginger (Japanese beni shoga)
4 nori seaweed sheets
fine sea salt, to taste

ONIGIRAZU

Rice Sandwiches

NORI | RICE | NATTO | JAPANESE MAYONNAISE | SESAME SEEDS AND OIL | SOY SAUCE | MIRIN | SAKE | RED PICKLED GINGER | TOBANJAN CHILLI BEAN PASTE | MISO

One of the latest food trends in Japan, Onigirazu was created by Tochi Ueyama in his popular Japanese manga comic *Cooking Papa*. Though similar to onigiri, Onigirazu rice sandwiches are not triangular-shaped, and their fillings are less traditionally Japanese.

1. Cook the white rice (see page 138). After the resting time, fluff the rice, add the white sesame seeds and mix thoroughly. Keep it warm. Make the Miso, Tobanjan Chilli and Garlic Sauce (see page 249), if using.
2. Make the Pork Soboro (see page 148). Take off the heat and let it cool down to room temperature.
3. While the meat is cooking, prepare the eggs – heat the sunflower oil in a large non-stick frying pan (skillet) and fry the eggs on both sides for 3–4 minutes in total until fully cooked and hard. Turn off the heat, cover the pan and set aside.
4. Cook the mangetout for 1 minute in salted boiling water, remove from the pan and plunge into chilled water. Drain, pat dry and finely slice on the diagonal. Place in a container, add the toasted sesame oil and a little sea salt, mix well and refrigerate until needed.
5. Drain the red pickled ginger strands from its pickling vinegar. Chop finely and set aside. Divide the rice into 4 equal parts, then split each part in half to make 8 portions – one portion will be used for the bottom layer and another for the top layer.
6. To assemble the Onigirazu, spread clingfilm (plastic wrap) over a chopping (cutting) board and place a sheet of nori seaweed on top (smooth side facing down), with one of the corners pointing up, away from you. Wet a plastic or wooden spatula with water and evenly spread one portion of the rice in a thin layer forming a square shape in the middle of the nori seaweed sheet. Sprinkle with some fine sea salt.
7. Spread about a quarter of the Pork Soboro evenly on top of the rice in a thin layer. Now place a quarter of the mangetout over half of the Pork Soboro with a quarter of the pickled ginger alongside the mangetout, over the other half of the Pork Soboro surface (which should now be completely covered). Top it with a fried egg followed by another portion of steamed rice – use a wet spatula or bowl scraper to keep the square shape as you spread the rice evenly on top of the filling. Finish with another sprinkle of fine sea salt.



8. Bring the left and right corners of the nori seaweed sheet towards the middle. Fold gently but tightly to wrap around the layers of rice and filling at the centre of the Onigirazu; if the corners do not overlap in the middle, you have put in too much filling or rice, and will need to take some of it out.

9. Now bring the bottom and top corners towards the middle. Continue to fold gently but tightly around the layers, making sure the rice is tucked firmly within the nori seaweed. For the Onigirazu to show all the ingredients after it is cut in half, you will need to cut it at the correct angle, i.e. the one that will split all ingredients equally in half. To do this, mark the correct angle as soon as you fold the Onigirazu using a couple of slices of mangetout or anything else at hand. If you cut at another angle, this is not the end of the world, but you will end up with one half having green mangetout and the other half having pink ginger pickle, as opposed to having both ingredients in each half.

10. Flip over and shape the Onigirazu gently with your hands. Wrap it tightly in the clingfilm (plastic wrap) and set aside for at least 5 minutes or until you are ready to serve. Repeat to make the rest of the Onigirazu.

11. Using a sharp knife dipped in cold water, cut the Onigirazu in half through the clingfilm (plastic wrap). Remove the cling film (plastic wrap) and serve the Onigirazu with the Miso, Tobanjan Chilli and Garlic Sauce if using.

12. Note, do not cut the Onigirazu until you are ready to serve it. If you are eating it as a snack during the day, keep it in the wrapper until then, and you do not need to cut it in half if you are eating it on the go. If you are making the Onigirazu ahead of time and need to refrigerate it, the rice will go hard in the fridge. So, before eating, microwave for 30 seconds to soften it.



OTHER SUGGESTED FILLINGS

NATTO, SPRING ONIONS (SCALLIONS) AND TOASTED BLACK SESAME SEEDS

300g (10½oz) natto fermented soybeans
1 tbsp toasted black sesame seeds
½ tsp soy sauce
¼ tsp wasabi or karashi mustard (or English mustard)
20g (¾oz) spring onions (scallions), finely sliced
generous sprinkle of fine sea salt, to taste

1. In a bowl, mix the natto fermented soybeans and black sesame seeds with the soy sauce and wasabi or karashi mustard until well combined.
2. Assemble the Onigirazu following the instructions on pages 86–8, layering the ingredients in this order: rice, sea salt, natto, spring onions (scallions) and finishing with the top layer of rice and sea salt.

BEEF BURGER, TERIYAKI SAUCE, AMERICAN CHEESE AND WASABI MAYONNAISE DRESSING

½ quantity of Teriyaki Sauce (see page 248)
½ quantity of Wasabi Mayonnaise Dressing (see page 251)
sunflower oil, for frying
4 beef burgers (patties), each about 180g (6½oz)
4 lettuce leaves
8 slices of American cheese
8 slices of Japanese or American cucumber pickle
generous sprinkle of fine sea salt, to taste

1. Make the Teriyaki Sauce (see page 248) and the Wasabi Mayonnaise Dressing (see page 251).
2. In a non-stick frying pan (skillet), heat the sunflower oil and fry the burgers. Add the Teriyaki Sauce a couple of minutes before the end of the cooking time.
3. Assemble the Onigirazu following the instructions on pages 86–8, layering the ingredients in this order: rice, salt, lettuce, burger with Teriyaki Sauce, cheese,

pickles, Wasabi Mayonnaise Dressing and finishing with the top layer of rice and salt. Serve more Wasabi Mayonnaise Dressing on the side.

SALMON OR FISHCAKES, AVOCADO AND WASABI MAYO DRESSING

1 quantity of Sushi Rice (see page 139)
1 tsp toasted white sesame seeds
½ quantity Wasabi Mayonnaise Dressing (see page 251)
300g (10½oz) super-fresh raw salmon fillet, skinned, boned and cut into thin slices or into 1-cm (½-inch) thick x 10-cm (4-inch) long batons (or you can use cooked salmon or sliced fishcakes for a non-raw version)
1–2 avocados, peeled and sliced
4 tbsp finely sliced spring onions (scallions)
fine sea salt, to taste

1. This Onigirazu will be prepared with Sushi Rice (as opposed to plain steamed short-grain rice), which is flavoured with sushi seasoning.
2. First make the Sushi Rice (see page 139). After seasoning the rice, add the white sesame seeds and mix thoroughly. Make the Wasabi Mayonnaise Dressing (see page 251).
3. Assemble the Onigirazu following the instructions on pages 86–8, layering the ingredients in this order: rice, salmon or fishcake, avocado, spring onions (scallions) and Wasabi Mayonnaise Dressing, finishing with the top layer of rice and salt.

Other Ideas for Fillings

- Ham, Cheddar cheese and Branston pickle
- Japanese omelette and spam slice fried in Teriyaki Sauce (see page 248) and sesame seeds
- Chicken Katsu Curry (see page 120)
- Pork katsu or tonkatsu with brown sauce and shredded cabbage
- Bacon, fried egg and brown sauce
- Buta Kakuni pieces (see page 56) and Cucumber Pickle (see page 75)
- Ebi-fry or fried fish fingers, watercress and Wasabi Mayonnaise Dressing (see page 251).

BLACKENED CAULIFLOWER

with Japanese Toasted Sesame Sauce

SERVES 4

1 cauliflower (about
600g/1lb 5oz)
3-4 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
Maldon sea salt flakes
freshly ground black pepper
1 quantity of Easy Sesame
Dressing (see page 250)

GOMADARE SAUCE (NERI GOMA OR JAPANESE SESAME PASTE) | SESAME SEEDS | SOY SAUCE | MIRIN

This recipe was inspired by a recent trip to Tel Aviv where celebrity chef Eyal Shani's burnt cauliflower was all the rage. But, unlike the Israeli version I tried, here I pair the vegetable with Japanese sesame sauce. There are many different versions of this creamy dressing in Japan and each household will probably have their own. Some like it sweeter while others a tad tangier; texture can also be adapted to suit different tastes – make it from toasted white sesame seeds for a nuttier and coarser texture, or use neri-goma or tahini (sesame seed paste) for a smoother dressing.

1. Preheat the oven to its highest setting. Depending on how hot your oven will get, you may need to use the grill (broiler) at the end of the cooking process.
2. Fill a pan (large enough to take the entire cauliflower) with salted water – use 10g (1/4oz) of salt per 1 litre (1 3/4 pints/4 cups) of water. Bring to the boil, then add the whole cauliflower to the pan and simmer for 6–8 minutes until softened. Drain the cauliflower over a colander and leave for 10 minutes.
3. Using your hands, gently baste the cauliflower head with the olive oil, and season with the salt and pepper.
4. Place the cauliflower (head side up) on a baking tin (pan) lined with non-stick baking (parchment) paper. Cook in the oven for 20–30 minutes or until blackened.
5. While the cauliflower is cooking, make the Easy Sesame Dressing (see page 250).
6. If the cauliflower is not thoroughly blackened after 30 minutes, place it under the grill (broiler) and let it blacken for 3–5 minutes, carefully rotating it so the entire upper part of the cauliflower is caramelized. Alternatively, use a blow-torch to blacken the cauliflower.
7. Place the blackened cauliflower on a platter and serve it hot with the Easy Sesame Dressing.



CHARRED HISPI CABBAGE

with Sesame Miso and Hazelnut Crumble

SERVES 4

2 small hispi or sweetheart cabbages

1–2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil, plus a little more for drizzling

For the sesame-miso sauce

100g (3½oz) Japanese neri-goma sesame paste or tahini paste (sesame paste)

100g (3½oz) white miso

100ml (3½fl oz/scant ½ cup) water

50ml (2fl oz/¼ cup) extra virgin olive oil

1 tbsp lemon juice

For the hazelnut crumble

2 tbsp hazelnuts, toasted and chopped

2 tbsp white sesame seeds, toasted

1 tsp Maldon sea salt flakes

SESAME PASTE AND SEEDS | WHITE MISO

Charring the cabbage wedges over a seriously hot griddle pan or barbecue will impart real depth of flavour to the vegetable and make it look great. The sesame-miso sauce can be made days in advance – it should taste creamy, nutty and savoury. This is a quick summer dish with unmistakable Japanese flavours.

1. Preheat a non-stick griddle pan over a high heat until smoking hot.
2. Discard the outer leaves of the hispi cabbages, then wash and cut the cabbages into equal quarters (so you have 8 in total).
3. Make the sesame-miso sauce by whisking all the sauce ingredients until completely smooth and the consistency of double (heavy) cream. If it is too thick, add a couple of tablespoons of water.
4. Heat the olive oil in the griddle pan, then place the cabbage quarters onto the griddle on one of the cut sides, place a heavy cast-iron lid on top to press them down, and griddle for 2 minutes on a very high heat. After 2 minutes, turn the cabbage quarters onto their other cut side, return the lid and griddle for a further 2 minutes. When the time is up, turn the cabbage onto their base with the blackened sides facing up, replace the lid and griddle for a final 2 minutes.
5. Meanwhile, mix together all the ingredients for the hazelnut crumble in a small bowl.
6. Remove the cabbage wedges from the griddle pan onto a serving platter, drizzle a couple of tablespoons of sesame-miso sauce over each cabbage wedge, followed by a little extra virgin olive oil and a generous sprinkle of the hazelnut crumble, and serve immediately.



JAPANESE MOCHI CHEESEBREADS

Japanese *Pão de Queijo*

MAKES 20–30
CHEESEBREADS

200g (7oz/1¾ cups)
glutinous rice flour
(mochiko or shiratamako)
1 tsp baking powder
½ tsp fine sea salt
1 large egg, beaten
50ml (2fl oz/¼ cup) whole
milk
50ml (2fl oz/¼ cup) melted
butter or sunflower oil
50g (1¾oz) Parmesan
cheese, grated
150g (5½oz) mature
Cheddar cheese, grated

JAPANESE GLUTINOUS RICE FLOUR (MOCHIKO OR SHIRATAMAKO)

What a surprise to find these Japanese Mochi Cheesebreads on my latest trip to Japan! They are similar to the quintessentially Brazilian and much loved *Pão de Queijo* but use Japanese glutinous rice rather than tapioca flour. They taste equally delicious – dense, a tad gooey and very cheesy. The dough will keep for days in your fridge and it freezes well too, so make double or triple quantities, shape them into golf-sized balls and pop them in your freezer. Bake them from frozen for a quick snack. They are at their very best eaten while still hot!

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C/350°F/gas mark 4.
2. Mix the rice flour and baking powder with the sea salt in a bowl until well combined.
3. Break the egg into a separate bowl and beat it with a whisk until lightly frothy.
4. Add the egg to the flour mix, followed by the milk, melted butter or sunflower oil and both grated cheeses. Knead the dough until all the ingredients are completely incorporated into a firm dough. Do not worry if the dough seems too dry at the start, it will take about 5 minutes of kneading for it to bind together.
5. Cut the dough into 20–30 equal parts and roll them into individual balls with your hands. Place them on a baking tray (sheet) lined with baking (parchment) paper or into a non-stick muffin tin and bake in the preheated oven for 20–25 minutes or until lightly golden.
6. Transfer the cheesebreads to a cooling rack and let them cool down slightly before eating. They are best eaten while hot.



BANANA AND KINAKO DOUGHNUTS

MAKES 8-12 SMALL DOUGHNUTS

sunflower oil, for deep-frying
200g (7oz) very ripe banana flesh (approximately 3 peeled bananas)
60g (2oz/½ cup) plain (all-purpose) flour
1 tsp baking powder
generous pinch of fine sea salt
50g (1¾oz) ripe banana flesh, cut into small cubes

To dust

1 tbsp icing (confectioner's) sugar
1 tbsp kinako flour

KINAKO FLOUR

Kinako is made by grinding roasted soybeans; it is a nutty and fragrant flour reminiscent of ground peanut, and so is a great substitute for those with a peanut allergy. Sweetened with sugar, it works well as a coating in traditional Japanese sweets as it does here in these homemade doughnuts. The doughnuts can be whipped up in about 3 minutes, just the time you need to heat the oil. They have an intense banana flavour and are soft and gooey inside but with a crispy and nutty outer layer. A tea-time favourite.

1. Heat enough sunflower oil to deep-fry the doughnuts to 155–160°C (311–320°F) in a deep frying pan (skillet).
2. In a large bowl, mash the very ripe banana flesh with a fork. Add the flour, baking powder and sea salt and mix using a rubber spatula until you have a thick cake batter (rather than firm dough). Finally fold in the cubes of banana.
3. Using a couple of deep spoons or an ice cream scoop, gently slide balls of the banana mixture into the hot oil. Fry for around 3–4 minutes until they are golden brown, flipping them over a couple of times for even browning. Remove from the oil and drain on a plate lined with kitchen paper (paper towel). Let them cool down for a few minutes.
4. Thoroughly mix the icing (confectioner's) sugar and kinako flour together, then dust this over the top of the hot doughnuts and serve. The inside will be gooey and very hot so be careful biting into them! Enjoy.



SWEET RED BEAN AND RICOTTA SWIRL ROLLS

MAKES 16–18 ROLLS

For the swirl rolls

1 quantity of smooth sweet red bean paste (see below) or 500g (1lb 2oz) canned, ready-made smooth red bean paste (known as anko or tsubu-an), available from Japanese grocers or online
250g (9oz) ricotta cheese
2 tbsp caster (superfine) sugar, plus extra for sprinkling
plain (all-purpose) flour, for dusting
350g (12oz) all-butter block or ready-rolled puff pastry
1 small egg
2 tbsp whole milk
1 tsp icing (confectioner's) sugar, for dusting

For the sweet red bean paste/anko (makes about 750g/1lb 12oz)

250g (9oz/1½ cups) adzuki beans
250g (9oz/1½ cups) granulated sugar
generous pinch of fine sea salt

ADZUKI BEANS | ANKO (SWEET RED BEAN PASTE)

Anko is a creamy Japanese sweet red bean paste made from adzuki beans and is a popular filling for Japanese cakes and sweets.

1. If using homemade sweet red bean paste, make this first. Soak the adzuki beans overnight in cold water to soften them, or if you would like to skip this step, just cook the beans for 10–15 minutes longer in the pressure cooker.
2. After soaking, drain the beans and rinse well under running water. Place the beans in a pressure cooker with five times the amount of fresh water to beans and cook for 20–25 minutes (or longer if you skipped the overnight soaking). If you do not have a pressure cooker, cook the beans in a pan for 1½–2 hours until soft. Once the beans are soft, drain them and rinse under cold, fresh water.
3. Transfer the cooked beans to a pan, add enough water to just cover them, and bring to the boil. Add the sugar, mixing well. Simmer on a low heat, uncovered, for about 30 minutes, stirring occasionally. You want a thick paste consistency in which the beans are half crushed. Add the salt and mix well.
4. Blitz the mixture while still hot in a food processor, then for a very smooth texture, pass through a fine sieve (strainer) into a clean bowl. Let the paste cool down completely. The paste is ready to be used, or will keep in the fridge for up to 1 week or in the freezer for up to 1 month.
5. Preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F/gas mark 6. In a bowl, mix the ricotta cheese and sugar together until well combined. On a well-floured surface, roll out the pastry to a rectangle about 30 x 40cm (12 x 16 inches). Working fast, with the back of a long knife, thinly spread the sweet red bean paste over the pastry followed by the sweetened ricotta cheese, making sure each goes to the edges. Each layer should be no more than about 3mm (¼ inch) in depth.
6. Roll the rectangle up from the longer side until it is the shape of a sausage. Transfer to a baking tray (sheet) lined with baking (parchment) paper and chill in the refrigerator for 10 minutes or until completely firm.
7. On a board, and using a serrated knife, cut the roll into 2cm (¾ inch) slices. Return the slices, flat-side down, to the baking tray (sheet) and press them down lightly so they spread out a little. Chill for a further 20 minutes.
8. Mix the egg and milk together in a small bowl. Brush the slices with the egg mixture, then sprinkle with caster (superfine) sugar and bake for 20–25 minutes until golden. Serve warm or cold with a dusting of icing (confectioner's) sugar.





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JAPANESE SPICES, CONDIMENTS AND GARNISHES





JAPANESE SPICES

For most people, spiciness is not the first thing that comes to mind when thinking of Japanese food. The use of spices may not be as prevalent in Japanese cuisine as it is, say, in Indian cooking, but there are still a number of Japanese spices that can bring an array of unique flavours to your everyday cooking. Some of the most relevant are sansho pepper (made from the buds of the sansho tree), Japanese chilli powders including ichimi and shichimi (containing seven different spices), and the ubiquitous wasabi in its many forms. Japan is also famous for its flavoured salts including sakura (cherry flower), wasabi and matcha green tea salts for example, and I will discuss these in more detail in this chapter.

Sansho Pepper

Sansho pepper is a Japanese spice made from the ground peppercorns of the native prickly ash tree (*Zanthoxylum piperitum*). The plant is related to the Sichuanese pepper tree.

Sansho pepper has a peppery-citrus flavour with a long residual heat. It is most often sold in powder form and sprinkled over grilled (broiled) eel (unagi) or chicken dishes such as teriyaki chicken or yakitori, and as a seasoning over rice and noodle dishes to impart a mildly hot and fragrant touch.

Unripe and beautifully green, whole sansho peppercorns can also be purchased fresh or preserved in salt brine in most supermarkets in Japan and are used as a relish. The whole fresh leaves are also used in Japanese cooking; known as kinome, they herald

A: WASABI PASTE	F: KARASHI MUSTARD
B: KARASHI	POWDER
MUSTARD	G: YUKARI PURPLE
C: SANSHO PEPPER	SHISO SALT
D: ICHIMI TOGARASHI	H: WASABI SALT
E: SHICHIMI PEPPER	I: MATCHA SALT

the arrival of spring and are often added as a garnish to delicate soups and sashimi platters.

I have included sansho pepper in a number of recipes in this book to encourage you to experiment with the ingredient – you can try it in the classic Japanese recipe for Oyakodon or Poached Chicken and Egg in Dashi and Soy Broth on page 40. For a modern take on sansho pepper cooking, I have added it to my recipe for Buttermilk and Sansho Pepper Crispy Fried Chicken (see page 116) and also in King Oyster Mushrooms, Soy and Sansho Pepper (see page 126). As you try this amazing ingredient you will note that it can in fact be added to many non-Japanese dishes such as omelettes, pasta dishes and even salads for a touch of heat and a wondrous fragrance.

Togarashi (Japanese Chilli Pepper) – Ichimi, Shichimi, Itokiri and Shishito

In Japanese togarashi refers to Japanese chilli pepper, and this term encompasses the fresh, mild and sweet green shishito pepper (much akin to Padron peppers) and the small and hot Japanese red chillies. In this chapter, we will consider the latter variety.

Japanese red chillies are used fresh when in season but are more commonly sold in dry form, either whole, in flakes, as a powder or shredded (as in itokiri togarashi, see the photograph on page 161). In whatever form you purchase, approach them with caution as their seeds are seriously hot.

The two most popular types of Japanese red chilli powder are known as ichimi and shichimi. Ichimi means 'one flavour' and is pure red chilli powder. Ichimi togarashi is seriously spicy and will add intense heat to any dish. Shichimi pepper or 'seven flavour or spices', on the other hand, is a mixture of ichimi plus six other ingredients – sansho pepper, dried mandarin peel, ginger, black hemp seeds, green nori flakes, poppy seeds and/or white sesame seeds. Shichimi pepper is found in most Japanese grocers or online.

Shichimi is a wonderful Japanese ingredient and one I really cannot be without. I use it in everything from popcorn to steaks, salads and udon noodles. It adds heat but also fragrance and nuances of flavour

that can elevate whatever you cook. I use shichimi pepper throughout this book including in the recipes for Mentaiko Spaghetti (see page 76), Daikon (White Radish) Fries, Garlic and Soy Sauce (see page 206), Seafood and Chorizo Ramen (see page 158) and the Japanese-style Mabo Dofu (see page 176).

Wasabi

Perhaps the most well-known of all Japanese spices, wasabi is the ubiquitous accompaniment to raw fish dishes such as sushi and sashimi. As its Latin name suggests, *Wasabia japonica* is unique to the Japanese archipelago. It is grown in irrigated terraces or running mountain streams. Sometimes compared to horseradish, wasabi is more fragrant and less astringent. The edible part of the plant is its rhizome or underground stem.

As a spice, wasabi can come in a variety of forms, but the most highly prized is of course finely

Fresh wasabi.



grated fresh wasabi, traditionally prepared on a shark skin grater. The next best alternative is frozen kizami (shredded) wasabi. It is made from the rhizome itself, though it may also contain other flavourings, including glucose and vegetable oil.

The other two forms, which are the most popular outside Japan, are wasabi paste and powder. Given the choice, I would go for the paste, because in addition to being ready-prepared, I find it has less of a bitter aftertaste than the powder. However, when choosing wasabi paste, take a look at the list of ingredients and check the percentage of *Wasabia japonica*, because it varies tremendously from brand to brand. Wasabi paste is made mostly from horseradish, plus various other ingredients including mustard and green colourant, with the percentage of *Wasabia japonica* varying from zero to five per cent.

The powder option has to be prepared ahead of time, and each brand will have its own potency. It is simply made by mixing powder with water then covering it and leaving it to ripen for 10 minutes. It can be eye-wateringly hot.

Wasabi adds an intense heat and flavour to a number of dishes in addition to sushi and sashimi. You can use it much as you would horseradish or mustard. It is a permanent feature in my kitchen to make recipes for Wasabi Mayonnaise Dressing (see page 251) or the Celeriac (Celery Root) Wasabi Remoulade (see page 128). You can also experiment using wasabi paste to make a delicious sticky sauce to go with Wasabi Prawns (Shrimp) (see page 112).

Karashi (Mustard)

Japanese mustard is rather strong, especially in comparison with the milder and sweeter American or French-style mustards. It is similar in style to English mustard, although it does not contain vinegar.

Karashi comes either as a paste or in powder form, and much like wasabi, the mustard needs to be reconstituted by mixing the powder with water then ripened for 10 minutes or so before using.

Because of its strength, karashi is used very sparingly as a condiment in dishes such as Buta No



Yukari purple shiso salt.

Kakuni or Pork Belly Squares in Cider, Soy Sauce and Brown Sugar (see page 56), and also as a flavouring in salad dressings. Karashi also features as a major ingredient in my recipes for Pork and Stilton Burgers with Karashi Mayo (see page 118) and Gerald's Legendary Roast Ham (see page 124).

Karashi-Su-Miso (mustard, rice vinegar and miso) is a classic Japanese sauce whose recipe I share on page 249, and which goes very well with seafood as in Lobster with Karashi-Su-Miso (see page 38).

Yukari (Dried Purple Shiso Salt)

Yukari is powdered dried shiso (perilla) leaves mixed with salt, making for a tangy, herbaceous and colourful seasoning. It is deep purple in colour, and normally used as a seasoning over steamed white rice, but also works beautifully in salads and stir-fries. Here we experiment with it in the recipe for Wok-Fried Cucumber with Chillies and Yukari Shiso Salt (see page 130).

Shio (Japanese Salts)

I never really paid much attention to the different types of salt until I lived in Japan. There is actually very little natural sea salt produced in Japan these days, and most of it is imported, but top Japanese

chefs will go to great lengths to source high-quality salts for their food. In Japan, tempura restaurants will usually serve their deep-fried foods with salt rather than a dipping sauce, each restaurant keeping the provenance of its salt a jealously guarded secret.

While I do not expect you to purchase Japanese sea salt, it is worthwhile knowing about a number of flavoured salts, which are often used and commonly found in any Japanese grocery store. Some of my favourites are matcha green tea, sakura (cherry blossom), seaweed and wasabi-flavoured salts.

My personal favourite way of using these salts is as flavouring to freshly popped, buttered popcorn. You just need to season the popcorn to your liking with one of the salts after popping them. In addition to tempura, other popular uses are with steaks, stir-fries, salad dressings and scrambled eggs, the sky is really the limit here.

You can substitute any of these flavoured salts in recipes where sea salt is called for as a finishing touch, or as an alternative to Ten Tsuyu Dipping Sauce (see page 250) for kakiage or tempura.



JAPANESE CONDIMENTS

Japanese Mayonnaise

Japanese mayonnaise differs from its Western cousin in a number of ways – it is sweeter and a tad tangier in flavour and has a thicker and creamier texture and colour. It is a versatile and delicious ingredient that can be easily replicated at home – see my recipe for Japanese Kewpie-Style Mayonnaise on page 250.

As for the shop-bought variety, Kewpie Mayonnaise has been the most popular brand in Japan since it was first introduced in 1925. I use it often and always have an opened bottle in my fridge plus a couple more bottles in my larder, any fewer than this and I worry! All Japanese brands, including Kewpie, are sold in a similar plastic squeeze bottle with a fine tip to make the perfect zigzag pattern on Okonomiyaki Osaka-Style (see page 208) or Okinawan Goya Champuru (see page 194).

Beyond Japanese cuisine, you can use Japanese mayonnaise in your everyday cooking in a variety of ways – as a base for salad dressings as in the recipe for Wasabi Mayonnaise Dressing (see page 251) and Celeriac (Celery Root) Wasabi Remoulade (see page 128), and in stir-fry sauces as in my recipe for Wok-Fried Green Beans and Chikuwa Fishcakes in Spicy Japanese Mayo Sauce (see page 122).

Yuzu Kosho

Yuzu kosho is one of my favourite Japanese ingredients – made with yuzu citrus peel and hot chillies cured in plenty of salt, it is then left to ferment in large clay pots for up to a month before it is ready to be used. It comes in green and red versions. Green yuzu kosho is made in summer when young green yuzu and chillies first appear, while the red variety is prepared in late autumn and early winter



Red and green yuzu kosho.

when the yuzu has turned bright yellow and the chillies red.

Yuzu kosho hails from the southern Japanese island of Kyushu, an area that has, over many centuries, traded with Southeast Asia, China and Korea producing some interesting cross-cultural foods including mentaiko (see Chapter 2) and yuzu kosho. It is a wondrously fragrant, spicy and zesty condiment that adds heaps of flavour to any dish.

In Japan, yuzu kosho is used in a variety of ways but most commonly in grilled (broiled) chicken, fish and seafood dishes, hotpots, sashimi and soups. In this chapter, I introduce yuzu kosho in my recipes for Pan-Fried Monkfish Cheeks, Yuzu Kosho and Coconut (see page 110) and Jumbo Prawns (Shrimp) Grilled (Broiled) in Yuzu Kosho and Garlic Butter (see page 114).

A: JAPANESE KEWPIE MAYONNAISE	D: YUZU KOSHO RED
B: JAPANESE SUSHI SEASONING	E: JAPANESE CURRY TABLETS
C: LA YU CHILLI OIL	F: TOBANJAN
	G: YUZU KOSHO GREEN



Japanese Curry

The Japanese absolutely love curry. Curry is consumed on average three or four times a month in Japanese households and is indeed so loved that it is the standard meal in the Japanese Navy on Fridays, as well as being consistently voted one of the favourite meals in Japanese school canteens. There are even rumours that curry is the Japanese Emperor's favourite food!

Introduced to Japan by the British in 1870, the Japanese quickly tweaked the recipe to their own palate – making it sweeter, milder and thicker in texture than other curry varieties from India, Thailand and Malaysia.

Japanese curries are super quick to prepare using the shop-bought tablets of curry roux – you simply add them to a vegetable and meat stew, magically turning them into curry. There are various brands of curry currently available in Japanese grocers and online: S&B's Golden Curry, House's Vermont Curry and Java Curry to name just a few. They are all available in mild, medium hot and hot versions.

I love creating my own homemade versions of ingredients but Japanese curry roux really breaks the mould – try as I might, the flavour of homemade curry roux was never quite the same as the shop-bought tablets. Their ingredient list makes for intriguing reading – apple, banana, honey, fenugreek and even cheese. Now, try and replicate that!

Traditionally served with rice, and aptly named Japanese Curry Rice (or Kare Raisu in Japan), it is one of the homeliest, most comforting of all Japanese dishes. In this chapter, I present a variation of this much loved recipe – my Chicken Katsu Curry on Rice (see page 120). Here, the chicken is coated in panko breadcrumbs, deep-fried and served over the rice and curry rather than mixed into the roux and vegetables. But if you prefer not to deep-fry, add bite-sized pieces of chicken, pork, beef or lamb to the roux or make it vegetarian, there are no set rules.

For a less conventional approach using shop-bought Japanese curry tablets, try my recipe for Japanese Curry Popcorn Rice with Coconut, Cashews and Curry Leaves (see page 132).

Tobanjan

Tobanjan, or as it is known in China 'doubanjiang', is a Chinese chilli bean paste hailing from Sichuan Province where it is commonly used in the native cuisine. In Korean cooking, a similar form of bean paste is known as doenjang.

The Japanese have adopted tobanjan as their own, using it often on a number of Japanese dishes. Unlike other chilli sauces and pastes, tobanjan is made from fermented soy and broad (fava) beans with added chillies, salt and other spices, so it is highly flavoursome and somewhat richer in umami.

You can experiment with tobanjan in my recipes for Sirloin Steak in Miso, Tobanjan Chilli and Garlic Sauce (see page 50) or in the Japanese-Style Mabo Dofu (see page 176). Tobanjan is one of my larder essentials and I add it to nearly every stir-fry, fried rice and spicy broth I make at home.

La Yu (Japanese Chilli Oil)

La Yu is Japanese chilli oil made with toasted sesame oil infused with crushed chilli (dried red pepper) flakes. It tastes nutty and is very spicy, so a little goes a long way. La Yu is mainly used in Japanese-style Chinese dishes or as a condiment for gyoza dumplings or ramen noodles.

You can use La Yu chilli oil in any dishes at home, for whatever cuisine you would like to add a whack of heat to. Here, I call for La Yu chilli oil in my recipes for Sunday Roast Chicken and Miso Ramen (see page 160) and for Seafood and Chorizo Ramen (see page 158).

Sushi Seasoning

Sushi seasoning, sometimes called sushi vinegar, is not to be confused with rice vinegar (see page 19). Sushi seasoning is made from rice vinegar, sugar and konbu.

You can purchase good-quality shop-bought sushi seasoning or you can make your own, see How to Prepare Sushi Rice on page 139.

JAPANESE GARNISHES

Tsukudani

Tsukudani encompasses an entire category of foods in Japan that have been enjoyed since the Edo period (1603-1868). Tsukudani refers to ingredients such as seaweed, small seafood and meat that have been caramelized in soy sauce, sake and sugar. Tsukudani has a high concentration of salt and sugar, which preserves it so it can last for months in the fridge.

Tsukudani is highly flavoursome and a quick side dish or garnish for other foods in many Japanese homes. It is great as a topping for ramen noodles or white rice, and may be used as a filling for Onigirazu Rice Sandwiches (see page 86). There are many kinds of tsukudani made from konbu, shiitake mushrooms, clams and baby fish that are sold at specialist tsukudani shops in Japan.

Tsukudani is a great use for konbu left over from when making dashi stock, so I always have a jar of it in my fridge. Why not try making your own Konbu No Tsukudani (see page 252)?

Furikake

Furikake adds a huge punch of flavour to white rice, pasta or anything you would like to sprinkle it over. The Japanese will always have furikake at hand – it is a must-have in any Japanese household.

Furikake is usually a mixture of dried seaweed and fish, sesame seeds, chilli pepper and myriad spices including sansho pepper, Yukari purple shiso salt and dehydrated miso and/or soy sauce.

I love having furikake over Japanese white rice but it also works brilliantly tossed into spaghetti that has been simply fried in a little olive oil and garlic, or even as a topping over buttered popcorn. These are two of my favourite ways of eating furikake! Furikake is readily available in any Japanese grocers or online, so why not try it?



Japanese konbu tsukudani and various types of furikake, which comes in every conceivable flavour combination.

PAN-FRIED MONKFISH CHEEKS, YUZU KOSHO AND COCONUT

My Japanese-Inspired Green Curry

SERVES 2

1 quantity of steamed white rice (see page 138)
300g (10½oz) monkfish cheeks
zest and juice of ½ a lime
1 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
1 tsp fine sea salt
sprinkle of freshly ground black pepper
150ml (5fl oz/⅔ cup) coconut milk
15g (½oz) yuzu kosho (available ready-made from most Japanese food stores)
4 tbsp Nam pla Thai fish sauce
1 tsp caster (superfine) sugar
2 tbsp coconut oil (or 1 tbsp unsalted butter and 1 tbsp extra virgin olive oil)
1 banana shallot, peeled and finely sliced
50g (1¾oz) fine green beans, ends trimmed and cut into 2.5cm (1 inch) batons
4 tbsp chopped coriander (cilantro)
1–2 tsp toasted sesame oil
1 tbsp micro coriander (micro cilantro) (optional)
½ tsp white sesame seeds
2 lime wedges, to serve

YUZU KOSHO | SESAME OIL

Yuzu kosho originates from Kyushu, a Japanese island that has produced many interesting foods due to centuries of trading with China, Korea and Southeast Asia. Made with yuzu citrus peel and hot chillies cured in plenty of salt, yuzu kosho comes in green and red versions and adds flavour, spice and fragrance to any dish.

In this recipe we use yuzu kosho, one of my favourite ingredients, to make my Japanese-inspired green curry – if you cannot find monkfish cheeks you can use cod cheeks or chicken thighs instead. The coconut milk and fish sauce add great creaminess and depth of flavour to the final dish alongside the yuzu kosho. I love having this with a big bowl of steamed white rice.

- 1.** Cook the white rice (see page 138) and keep warm. Using a sharp knife, scrape off the hard, white skin from the monkfish cheeks. Place the monkfish cheeks in a bowl with the lime zest and juice, olive oil, salt and pepper. Mix well and let it marinate for 15–30 minutes.
- 2.** In a bowl, whisk the coconut milk, yuzu kosho, fish sauce and sugar until thoroughly combined.
- 3.** Place a non-stick frying pan (skillet) over a medium heat, add the coconut oil (or mix of butter and olive oil) and heat until smoking. Carefully remove the monkfish cheeks from the marinade (reserving the marinade) and place in the pan. Fry for 1 minute on each side so that the cheeks are lightly coloured.
- 4.** Add the monkfish cheek marinade to the pan, followed by the coconut milk and yuzu kosho mixture, the shallot and green beans, mixing them gently. Bring to the boil, then simmer gently for 2–3 minutes.
- 5.** Remove from the heat, add the coriander (cilantro) and check for seasoning, adding more salt or pepper if necessary. Drizzle some toasted sesame oil over the curry, top with the micro coriander (micro cilantro) and white sesame seeds and serve with the steamed white rice and lime wedges.



WASABI PRAWNS (SHRIMP)

Deep-Fried, Crispy Prawns (Shrimp) in Wasabi Cream

SERVES 4

For the wasabi cream

100g (3½oz) Japanese mayonnaise
30g (1¼oz) wasabi paste
25g (1oz/4 tsp) sweetened condensed milk
2 tbsp freshly squeezed lemon juice
¼ tsp sea salt

For the prawns (shrimp)

12 large prawns (shrimp)
½ tsp sea salt
½ tsp caster (superfine) or granulated sugar
1 tbsp lemon juice
1 tsp toasted sesame oil (optional)
sunflower oil, for deep-frying
100g (3½oz/¾ cup) katakuriko potato starch or cornflour (cornstarch)
1 egg white
1 tbsp almonds, flaked and toasted

WASABI | JAPANESE MAYONNAISE | KATAKURIKO POTATO STARCH | SESAME OIL

There is so much more to wasabi than just a mere accompaniment to sushi and sashimi – in this recipe I create a sticky, sweet and wonderfully spicy cream using wasabi, Japanese mayonnaise and condensed milk to coat meaty, deep-fried crispy prawns (shrimp). The flaked, toasted almonds add an extra layer of flavour and texture to the prawns (shrimp). This is a ridiculously easy dish to put together taking no time to rustle up and with only a couple of specialist ingredients.

1. Make the wasabi cream by mixing all the wasabi cream ingredients together in a bowl.
2. Peel the prawns (shrimp), keeping their tails intact. Devein them by making a shallow incision lengthways in each prawn (shrimp), and, using a small knife or toothpick, pull out the stomach tract.
3. Season the prawns (shrimp) with the salt, sugar, lemon juice and toasted sesame oil, if using. Leave to marinate for 15–30 minutes.
4. In a pan, heat enough sunflower oil to deep-fry the prawns (shrimp) to 180°C (350°F).
5. Meanwhile, remove the prawns (shrimp) from the marinade and pat dry with kitchen paper (paper towel). Coat the prawns (shrimp) lightly in katakuriko potato starch or cornflour (cornstarch), dip them into the egg white, and finally coat them again, this time a bit more generously, with katakuriko potato starch or cornflour (cornstarch).
6. Deep-fry the prawns (shrimp) for about 1 minute or until lightly coloured, then transfer to a rack over a tray to drain the excess oil.
7. Place the crispy prawns (shrimp) in a bowl, add the wasabi cream and gently turn them over in the cream to coat them completely while still hot. Sprinkle over the almonds and serve immediately.



JUMBO PRAWNS (SHRIMP)

Grilled (Broiled) in Yuzu Kosho and Garlic Butter

SERVES 4

8 jumbo prawns (shrimp)
2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
75g (2³/₄oz/1/3 cup) unsalted butter, semi-soft and still lightly chilled
25g (1oz) yuzu kosho
3 garlic cloves, peeled and finely chopped
1 lemon, cut into 4 wedges
micro coriander (micro cilantro) or another green micro herb of choice

YUZU KOSHO

Yuzu kosho and garlic butter is a fantastic way to use yuzu kosho, a Japanese ingredient that has great affinity with grilled (broiled) seafood and meats. Made from the rind of the Japanese yuzu citrus, hot chillies and natural salt, yuzu kosho is a condiment that bursts with flavour, zinginess and heat. I use some XXL jumbo prawns (shrimp) for this recipe, but if you cannot get hold of them, use the largest prawns (shrimp) you can find. Preparing and cooking the prawns (shrimp) in their shells as I describe in the recipe mean that they remain sweet, succulent and juicy. You can experience all the benefits of eating a prawn (shrimp) in the shell but without any of the mess.

1. Heat the grill (broiler) to its highest setting.
2. Using a sharp knife, cut a slit along the upper part of the prawn (shrimp) shell from the head all the way down to the tail. Keep the shell open but attached to the flesh.
3. Discard the stomach tract and continue cutting through the flesh about two-thirds of the way down to open them up and create a bed for the yuzu kosho and garlic butter. Do not cut all the way through the prawns (shrimp). Using your hands, gently press them down once open to flatten them. Drizzle the prawns (shrimp) all over with the olive oil.
4. In a bowl, mix together the semi-softened butter, yuzu kosho and chopped garlic until well combined.
5. Fill the prawn (shrimp) cavities liberally with the yuzu kosho and garlic butter. Place them on a baking tray (sheet) lined with foil and then cook under the hot grill (broiler) for 3 minutes. Quickly remove the baking tray (sheet) from the oven and baste the prawns (shrimp) with the melted butter. Return them to the oven and grill (broil) for a further 1-2 minutes. Remove from the oven.
6. Serve with lemon wedges and green micro herbs.



BUTTERMILK AND SANSHO PEPPER CRISPY FRIED CHICKEN

SERVES 4

8 chicken thighs (about 1.2kg/2½lb), skinless, boneless, excess fat removed
sunflower oil, for deep-frying

For the buttermilk marinade

2 tsp sansho pepper
¼ teaspoon white pepper (optional)
1 tsp sea salt
2 garlic cloves, crushed
300ml (10fl oz/1¼ cups) buttermilk

For the seasoned flour

200g (7oz/1⅔ cups) plain (all-purpose) flour
1 tsp sea salt
1 tsp sansho pepper
¼ teaspoon white pepper (optional)

To serve

generous sprinkle of sansho pepper
Maldon sea salt flakes, to taste
1 lemon, cut into 4 wedges

SANSHO PEPPER

In this recipe I use two ingredients that have a remarkable affinity with chicken – Japanese sansho pepper and buttermilk. Sansho pepper is a Japanese spice made from the ground peppercorns of the native prickly ash tree, a cousin of the Sichuanese pepper tree. Sansho pepper has a peppery-citrus flavour with a long residual heat. Buttermilk, though not a Japanese ingredient, makes for a fantastic chicken marinade – despite its name, buttermilk is neither buttery nor creamy, it is in fact rather sour like yoghurt. Traditionally buttermilk was the liquid left behind after churning butter out of cultured cream. Nowadays, buttermilk is made from pasteurized milk with added culture of good bacteria that help to convert the milk sugars into lactic acid. And it is this that also breaks down the chicken meat, making it super tender and juicy. I like serving these crispy fried chicken nuggets with Wasabi Mayonnaise Dressing (see page 251).

1. Cut the chicken into bite-sized pieces, each about 4cm (1½ inches).
2. In a large bowl, mix together all the ingredients for the buttermilk marinade. Stir in the chicken pieces, making sure they are thoroughly coated. Cover and refrigerate for a minimum of 4 hours or overnight.
3. Take the bowl out of the fridge 30–60 minutes before cooking to bring it to room temperature. Meanwhile, prepare the seasoned flour by combining all the ingredients in a shallow tray. Heat enough sunflower oil to deep-fry the chicken in a deep-fat fryer or large pan to 160°C (320°F).
4. When the oil is hot enough, dredge the chicken pieces in the flour. Do not coat them beforehand as the chicken will 'sweat' and the coating will become soggy and will not crisp up. Remove a few chicken pieces from the buttermilk marinade and dredge them in the seasoned flour. Shake off any excess flour and carefully lower them, one by one, into the hot oil. Repeat until all pieces are coated in the seasoned flour and in the pan, and cook for 7–10 minutes until nicely golden.
5. Remove the chicken from the oil and transfer to a rack set over a tray. Let it rest for a couple of minutes then serve with a generous sprinkle of sansho pepper, sea salt flakes and lemon wedges.



PORK AND STILTON BURGERS

with Karashi Mayo (Japanese Mustard Mayonnaise)

SERVES 6

1 quantity of Karashi Mayo
(see page 251)
350g (12oz) Stilton cheese
1kg (2¼lb) minced (ground)
pork
2 tsp fine sea salt
6 brioche burger baps
50g (1¾oz/¼ cup)
unsalted butter, at room
temperature
50g (1¾oz) baby rocket
(arugula) leaves, washed
6–12 tomato slices
½ quantity of Japanese
pickles (see pages 72–75)
or Sweet Cucumber
and Wakame pickle (see
page 44)

KARASHI MAYO (KARASHI MUSTARD, JAPANESE MAYONNAISE) | JAPANESE PICKLES

Pork, Stilton cheese and spicy Japanese mustard is a combination I return to every summer without fail, my go-to recipe whenever the sun is shining and a barbecue with friends is in order. But why wait until summer? Here, I adapt my original barbecue recipe so that you can make it in your own kitchen any time of the year. I also like to serve these burgers with the Daikon (White Radish) Fries, Garlic and Soy Sauce (see page 206).

Karashi is Japanese hot mustard made of a mixture of crushed mustard seeds and horseradish. It's used as a condiment in Japanese cuisine, for example with oden, gyoza and tonkatsu. It is very strong and hot, similar to English mustard, but it does not contain vinegar.

1. Make the Karashi Mayo (see page 251).
2. Preheat the grill (broiler) to its highest setting. Line a baking tray (sheet) with a layer of foil. Cut 6 cubes of Stilton cheese and set them aside. Chop the remaining Stilton finely.
3. In a bowl, mix the chopped Stilton, minced (ground) pork and sea salt until well combined.
4. Using your hands, mould 6 burgers, each about 200g (7oz). Bury 1 cube of the reserved Stilton in the centre of each burger, making sure it is completely covered. Place the burgers on the prepared baking tray (sheet) 2–3 cm (1 inch) apart.
5. Place the baking tray (sheet) under the hot grill (broiler), and grill (broil) the burgers for 5 minutes. Flip the burgers over, place them back under the grill (broiler) and cook for a further 10 minutes, by which time they should have a nice golden crust. Check that the burgers are thoroughly cooked by piercing one burger with a sharp knife. Return it to the oven for a little longer if not cooked.
6. As the burgers are cooking, slice the brioche baps in half, spread the butter on the brioche and lightly toast both halves on a frying pan (skillet) over a medium heat.
7. To serve, spread some Karashi mayo over the toasted brioche, top with a handful of baby rocket (arugula) leaves, then the tomato slices and the Japanese pickles. Add the pork and Stilton burger and finish with a good dollop of Karashi Mayo. Serve immediately.



鶏肉カツカレー

SERVES 6

2 quantities of steamed white rice (see page 138)

For the chicken katsu

6 boneless chicken thighs, skin on
2 tbsp dark soy sauce
2 garlic cloves, crushed
4–6 tbsp katakuriko potato starch or cornflour (cornstarch)
2 eggs, beaten
100g (3½oz) Japanese panko breadcrumbs
sunflower oil, for deep-frying

For the vegetable curry

200g (7oz) baby onions
200g (7oz) carrots
400g (14oz) potatoes
400g (14oz) courgettes (zucchini) (about 2)
50g (1¾oz/¼ cup) butter
2 tbsp sunflower oil
800ml (28fl oz/3⅓ cups) water
120g (4oz) Japanese hot curry tablets (S&B Golden Curry)
1–2 tbsp light soy sauce (usukuchi shoyu) or sea salt to taste (optional)

To garnish

50g (1¾oz) mangetout, blanched in boiling water for 15 seconds, refreshed under cold water
50g (1¾oz) red pickled ginger (Japanese beni shoga)

CHICKEN KATSU CURRY ON RICE

JAPANESE CURRY | SHORT-GRAIN RICE | PANKO BREADCRUMBS | RED PICKLED GINGER | SOY SAUCE

To me, Katsu Curry is all about comfort eating – it is a wonderful combination of Japanese curry plus katsu (meat or seafood coated in panko breadcrumbs and deep-fried). It is easy to make and tastes so much better than the shop-bought stuff. You can use other types of meat such as pork, beef, lamb or seafood, or perhaps make it vegetarian.

1. Cook the white rice (see page 138) and keep it warm. In a bowl, mix the chicken thighs with the soy sauce and garlic, and let them infuse for 30 minutes.
2. Make the curry. Peel the onions, carrots and potatoes then chop them and the courgettes (zucchini) separately into irregular bite-sized chunks. Heat the butter and sunflower oil in a medium-sized pan over a medium heat until the butter is melted. Add the onions and fry gently for a couple of minutes until translucent but not coloured. Add the carrots and potatoes and stir well to coat in the hot oil. Add the measured water, bring to the boil, then turn down the heat and simmer for about 5 minutes for the vegetables to begin to soften. Add the Japanese curry tablets and mix gently until completely dissolved.
3. Continue simmering for another 5 minutes, stirring from time to time to ensure it is not catching on the bottom of the pan. Finally, add the chopped courgette (zucchini) and simmer for a final 5 minutes. The sauce should have thickened, the potatoes and carrots should be soft but not disintegrating and the courgette (zucchini) should still retain some bite. Check for seasoning and add a little soy sauce or salt if desired. Turn off the heat.
4. In a medium-sized pan heat enough sunflower oil to 160°C (320°F) to deep-fry the chicken. Take 3 deep but flattish plates or bowls, and separately place the potato starch or cornflour (cornstarch), the beaten eggs and the Japanese panko breadcrumbs in each. Take a couple of the chicken thighs and coat them first in the potato starch, then dip them in the egg, followed by a generous coating of panko breadcrumbs, pressing them gently so the breadcrumbs stick.
5. Deep-fry the chicken thighs, 2 at a time, turning the pieces over occasionally until they are golden brown and crispy, this should take 6–7 minutes. Transfer to a plate lined with kitchen paper (paper towel) to drain and continue frying the remaining chicken. Slice the chicken thighs.
6. Divide the rice between 6 shallow bowls, spoon the vegetable curry beside the rice and place the sliced chicken over the curry. Top with the mangetout and red pickled ginger and serve immediately.



WOK-FRIED GREEN BEANS AND CHIKUWA FISHCAKES

in Spicy Japanese Mayo Sauce

SERVES 4

½ quantity Japanese
Kewpie-style mayonnaise
(see page 250) or 4 tbsp
Japanese mayonnaise
2 tbsp tobanjan chilli bean
paste
2 garlic cloves, finely
chopped
250g (9oz) fine green
beans, tailed
2 tbsp sesame oil, plus 1 tsp
to drizzle
2cm (¾ inch) piece of root
ginger, peeled and finely
chopped
1 red chilli, finely diced
100g (3½oz) Japanese
Chikuwa fishcakes, cut into
thin slices
1 tsp toasted white sesame
seeds

CHIKUWA FISHCAKE | JAPANESE MAYONNAISE | TOBANJAN CHILLI BEAN PASTE | SESAME SEEDS AND OIL | GINGER

A super-fast stir-fry using Chikuwa fishcake, Japanese mayonnaise and tobanjan. Also known as 'doubanjiang', tobanjan is a chilli bean paste from Sichuan Province, China, but the Japanese have adopted it as their own. Unlike other chilli sauces, tobanjan is made from fermented soy and broad (fava) beans with added chillies, salt and other spices, so it is richer in umami and full of flavour. The combination of tobanjan, Japanese mayonnaise and chikuwa fishcakes delivers maximum flavour with minimal effort in this dish, my kind of cooking!

1. Prepare the Japanese Kewpie-style Mayonnaise (see page 250) or use ready-made Japanese mayonnaise. To this add the tobanjan chilli bean paste and half of the chopped garlic, mix well and set aside.
2. Blanch the green beans in plenty of boiling salted water for 1 minute, drain and plunge into a bowl filled with chilled water. Drain, pat dry and cut the beans in half midway.
3. Heat 2 tbsp of sesame oil in a wok until hot, add the remaining chopped garlic, along with the ginger and chilli and fry for about 10 seconds until fragrant. Add the Japanese fishcakes and fry, stirring constantly for 2–3 minutes until they are lightly coloured but not crispy.
4. Now add the green beans and stir-fry until they start to blister, this should take 2–3 minutes. Turn off the heat.
5. Take the wok off the hot hob (stove) and add the spicy mayo a couple of tablespoons at a time. If the wok is too hot it will curdle the mayo. Fold the mayo into the dish until the beans and fishcakes are completely coated, adding more mayo if necessary.
6. Transfer to a serving dish, drizzle a little toasted sesame oil over, finish with a generous sprinkle of white sesame seeds and serve immediately.



GERALD'S LEGENDARY ROAST HAM

in Karashi Mustard and Brown Sugar Crust with
Japanese Mustard Sauce

SERVES 4 AS A MAIN
OR 8 AS A STARTER

1–1.5kg (2¼lb–3lb 5oz)
boneless gammon joint
2 tbsp Japanese karashi
mustard paste or 2 tbsp
Japanese karashi mustard
powder dissolved in 2 tbsp
water, and ripened for 30
minutes
50g (1¾oz/¼ cup) demerara
sugar

For the Japanese mustard sauce

2 tbsp Japanese karashi
mustard paste or 2 tbsp
Japanese karashi mustard
powder dissolved in 2 tbsp
water, and ripened for 30
minutes
4 tbsp rice vinegar or white
wine vinegar
2 tbsp golden granulated
sugar
1 egg yolk
150ml (5fl oz/⅔ cup)
sunflower oil
fine sea salt, to taste

KARASHI MUSTARD | RICE VINEGAR

This dish was inspired by my partner's mean Sunday roast ham. He makes it often at our home and it has been an endless source of nourishment and happiness for many years. The Japanese karashi mustard and sugar crust as well as the sweet mustard sauce are my own addition, making this an Anglo-Japanese roast ham you ought to try!

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C/350°F/gas mark 4. Place a small upturned enamel plate in the bottom of a large, oven-proof pan to avoid the gammon joint from burning or drying out from the direct heat. Put the gammon on the plate and cover with fresh cold water, covering the pan with a lid. Bring to the boil then transfer the pan to the preheated oven and cook the gammon for 1–1½ hours (20 minutes for every 450g/1lb plus 20 minutes) or until the internal temperature reaches 75°C (167°F).

2. Remove the joint from the pan and test for doneness, if not using a food thermometer, insert a skewer through to its centre, it should go through easily and the juices run clear. Allow the meat to cool down and remove any strings. Peel off the skin from the ham and score the fatty surface. (The ham can be cooked up to 3 days in advance. If not cooking immediately, wrap the ham tightly in plenty of clingfilm/plastic wrap and refrigerate until needed.)

3. Increase the oven temperature to 220°C/425°F/gas mark 7. Transfer the gammon to a roasting tin (pan), then using your hands or a rubber spatula, coat the gammon with the karashi mustard paste and then gently rub the demerara sugar over the entire ham to create a mustard and sugar crust. Place the gammon in the preheated oven and brown the gammon joint for 10–15 minutes.

4. Meanwhile, prepare the Japanese mustard sauce. Place the karashi mustard paste, rice vinegar, sugar and egg yolk in a food processor and whizz until thoroughly combined and the sugar dissolved. Slowly start incorporating the sunflower oil as it blends. The desired consistency should be of double (heavy) cream, but if the sauce is too thick, add a little water. Season with salt and check for seasoning. The sauce should be both savoury and sweet, with a lovely tartness from the rice vinegar and a gentle kick of heat from the mustard.

5. Serve the ham hot (or at room temperature), cut up in slices with the Japanese mustard sauce.



KING OYSTER MUSHROOMS, SOY AND SANSHO PEPPER

with Duck Egg Yolk

SERVES 4

3 king oyster (*eryngii*) mushrooms (about 250g/9oz)
4 duck eggs
micro green shiso leaves (or basil, Thai basil or tarragon)
generous sprinkle of sansho pepper
Maldon sea salt flakes, to taste

For the marinade/glaze

50g (3/4oz/1/4 cup) unsalted butter, melted
50ml (2fl oz/1/4 cup) extra virgin olive oil
25ml (1fl oz/5 tsp) soy sauce

SANSHO PEPPER | KING OYSTER MUSHROOMS | SOY SAUCE | SHISO

I had a similar and very delicious dish at a San Sebastian pintxo bar in the Spanish Basque Country a few years ago. I got home determined to replicate it, though I could not help but use some of my favourite Japanese ingredients - *eryngii* mushrooms doused in soy sauce, melted butter and olive oil, fragrant sansho pepper and green micro shiso for garnish. This is another simple yet good example of the synergies gained when Japanese and Western ingredients and flavours come together.

1. Make the marinade by whisking together all the marinade ingredients in a bowl until completely emulsified.
2. Wipe the king oyster mushrooms and slice them lengthways into 5-mm (1/4-inch) thick slices.
3. Place half of the marinade in a bowl, add the sliced mushrooms and let them marinate for 10–15 minutes.
4. Lightly grease a griddle pan and place it over a high flame until very hot and smoking. Using a pair of tongs, carefully lay the mushroom slices over the hot griddle and fry for 30 seconds, turn them over one by one and fry for a further 30–60 seconds.
5. Share the fried mushroom slices equally between 4 separate plates. Separate the duck eggs carefully, discard the whites and place one duck egg yolk in the middle of each plate.
6. To serve, using a brush quickly glaze the mushroom slices with the remaining half of the marinade, scatter the micro shiso (or other herb of your choice) over and finish off with a generous sprinkle of sansho pepper and sea salt flakes. Serve immediately.



CELERIAC (CELERY ROOT) WASABI REMOULADE

with Wasabi Mayonnaise, Lemon and Chives

SERVES 4

1 quantity of Wasabi
Mayonnaise Dressing (see
page 251)
300g (10½oz) celeriac
(celery root)
2 tbsp chives, finely chopped
sea salt
freshly ground black pepper
1 tsp black sesame seeds,
toasted
edible flowers, to garnish
(optional)

WASABI | JAPANESE MAYONNAISE | BLACK SESAME SEEDS

Another good use of wasabi beyond sushi and sashimi, my Celeriac (Celery Root) Wasabi Remoulade is a great accompaniment to a number of grilled (broiled) fish and meat dishes in this book.

The Wasabi Mayonnaise Dressing (see page 251) should be just thick enough to cling to the roots, it should be creamy without being soupy. Make the dressing first and add it to the shredded celeriac (celery root) as soon as it is cut to avoid it discolouring or turning brown. It will keep for a couple of days in the fridge.

1. Make the Wasabi Mayonnaise Dressing (see page 251).
2. Peel then shred the celeriac (celery root) – the shreds should not be too fine, nor should they be thicker than a matchstick. I find a mandolin very useful for this. Toss them immediately into the Wasabi Mayonnaise Dressing, add the chives and season well with salt and black pepper.
3. Let the remoulade rest for at least 15 minutes. If it is a bit dry, add a couple of tablespoons of Greek yoghurt or mayonnaise, and mix well to loosen it. Check the seasoning again, adjust if necessary, sprinkle on the toasted black sesame seeds and serve with the edible flowers if using.



WOK-FRIED CUCUMBER

with Chillies and Yukari Shiso Salt

SERVES 2

1 cucumber (about
400g/14oz)
2 tbsp sunflower oil
1 long red chilli, deseeded
and finely diced
2 garlic cloves, crushed
1 tbsp light soy sauce
(usukuchi shoyu)
1 tbsp rice vinegar
1 tsp toasted sesame oil
2 tsp yukari purple shiso
seasoning
generous pinch of Maldon
sea salt flakes

To garnish

micro red amaranth
edible flowers

YUKARI PURPLE SHISO SALT | SOY SAUCE | RICE VINEGAR | SESAME OIL

Yukari is powdered dried shiso (perilla) leaves mixed with salt, making for a zingy, herbaceous and colourful seasoning. It is deep purple in colour, and normally used over steamed white rice, but also works beautifully in salads and stir-fries. Over a few failed attempts, I discovered that the secret of stir-frying cucumber is adding it only when the wok is seriously hot and smoking, so that it is done fast and before the cucumber releases much of its water. I find the flavour of charred cucumber, tangy Yukari shiso salt and chillies terribly addictive and they make for a quick but unusual stir-fry I am sure you will enjoy.

1. Cut the cucumber in half lengthways, then cut each half diagonally into 5-mm (¼-inch) thick slices. Prepare all the other ingredients so they are ready to be added to the wok.
2. Heat the wok on your stove's largest and highest flame until it is seriously hot and smoke rises. Add the sunflower oil and swirl it around. Now carefully add the cucumber slices to the wok (the oil may splatter so watch out), spreading the slices out so that the base of the wok is thoroughly covered and fry for 1 minute without stirring. After a minute, the cucumber should start to blister and get lightly charred.
3. Now add the red chilli and garlic and stir-fry for about 30 seconds until fragrant, then add the light soy sauce and rice vinegar and mix well.
4. Remove the pan from the heat, add the sesame oil and 1 tsp of Yukari purple shiso seasoning and mix well. Transfer to a serving bowl, sprinkle with the remaining yukari purple shiso seasoning and add a generous pinch of sea salt flakes, the micro red amaranth and edible flowers. Serve immediately.



JAPANESE CURRY POPCORN RICE

with Coconut, Cashews and Curry Leaves

SERVES 2

½ quantity of steamed white rice (see page 138)
sunflower oil, for deep-frying
50g (1¾oz/⅓ cup) coconut flakes, or unsweetened desiccated (shredded) coconut
100g (3½oz/¾ cup) cashew nuts (or any other nut of your choice)
1 hot red chilli, thinly sliced (do not remove the seeds)
few fresh curry leaves
1 tbsp hot Japanese curry, very finely chopped
fine sea salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

SHORT-GRAIN RICE | JAPANESE CURRY

Making rice crisps is not difficult, and properly flavoured they taste delicious. Sweetened with icing (confectioner's) sugar I use popcorn rice as a crunchy topping for my Genmaicha Ice Cream (see page 231). Here, I use Japanese curry for flavouring instead, and stir-fry it with a mix of cashew nuts, curry leaves, coconut and hot red chillies. It is a Japanese-inspired Bombay Mix, or should I say Tokyo Mix? It goes brilliantly with a chilled beer!

1. Cook the white rice (see page 138).
2. Preheat the oven to 120°C/240°F/gas mark ¼-½. Line a baking tray (sheet) with baking (parchment) paper and spread the rice out on it. Bake (dehydrate) in the oven for 2 hours, turning the rice over halfway through. If you have a dehydrator, dehydrate the rice overnight. The rice should be dry at the end of either method, if not, leave it for a little longer, checking every 15 minutes or so. Do not over dry the rice, it should be completely white and not coloured. Remove from the oven and let it cool down completely for about an hour. If the rice is in clusters, break these up with your hand.
3. In a medium-sized pan, heat enough sunflower oil for deep-frying to around 220°C (428°F), but do not fill the pan more than a third full. Add around a quarter of the dehydrated rice to the pan, fry for 10–20 seconds until it puffs up and comes to the surface, then quickly remove with a slotted spoon and place in a metal sieve (strainer) over a bowl. Repeat until all the rice is fried. Let the popped rice drain for a few minutes.
4. Meanwhile, prepare the other ingredients. Using a non-stick frying pan (skillet), dry-fry the coconut flakes for a few minutes stirring constantly until lightly toasted and coloured, then remove from the pan and set aside. Add the cashew nuts to the pan and dry-fry them until lightly browned, remove from the pan and set aside.
5. Add a couple of tablespoons of the hot sunflower oil to the frying pan (skillet), and, on a medium heat, fry the red chilli and curry leaves for 10 seconds. Add the toasted coconut flakes, cashew nuts, popped rice and Japanese curry and stir vigorously until well combined. Finally season with salt and black pepper.
6. Serve immediately or it will keep in an airtight container for up to 2 days.



たっちゃん





JAPANESE RICE, NOODLES AND TOFU





JAPANESE RICE

Rice is at the core of a Japanese meal, and is eaten at breakfast, lunch and dinner. Japanese rice is short-grain and stubby compared to other kinds such as basmati, jasmine or American long-grain rice. It is also more starchy and sticky than these varieties. In Japanese 'kome' means 'uncooked rice' and 'gohan', 'meshi' or 'raisu' means 'cooked rice'.

Grown for over 2,500 years, there are a staggering 700 known types of rice in Japan, of which about 300 are cultivated. The best-known variety, koshihikari, accounts for the majority of all rice consumed in the country. Many rice-producing regions in Japan are surrounded by mountains. In spring, melting snow carries nutrient-rich water down rivers and streams, which is used to irrigate the paddy fields. This cold, mineral-rich snowmelt is crucial to developing the unique flavour of Japanese rice.

Ordinary and Glutinous Short-Grain Rice

Ordinary Japanese short-grain rice (uruchimai) is translucent in colour and can be either polished and white, or retain some of its bran (nuka) and is therefore brown. Glutinous short-grain rice (mochi gome) is starchier, opaque in colour and even more stubby. It is used mostly for mochi (rice cakes) in Japan as well as for rice flour (see Chapter 2).

A: WHITE SHIRATAKI NOODLES	I: GLUTINOUS SHORT-GRAIN RICE
B: UDON (FROZEN)	J: MOCHI RICE CAKES
C: BROWN SHIRATAKI NOODLES	K: SOMEN NOODLES
D: OKARA (SOYBEAN PULP)	L: UDON (DRIED) NOODLES
E: TOFU (FIRM)	M: SOBA BUCKWHEAT NOODLES
F: SOY MILK	N: GREEN TEA SOBA NOODLES
G: TOFU (SILKEN)	O: RAMEN NOODLES
H: SHORT-GRAIN RICE	P: HARUSAME GLASS NOODLES

I give full instructions on How To Cook Short-Grain Rice on page 138 using either a rice cooker (which I highly recommend you buy) or a pan over a stove. I use short-grain rice in the traditional Japanese recipe Soboro Gohan or Japanese Four-Coloured Rice (see page 148). It also features in the recipes for Edamame Gohan (see page 152), Japanese Three Mushroom Rice (see page 210), and Hijiki, Carrots and Abura-Age Tofu Rice (see page 154).

Nowadays, Japanese rice is enjoyed all over the world in the ever-popular sushi and as a base for sake. However, it is also an incredibly versatile ingredient lending itself brilliantly to a number of non-Japanese dishes such as risotto, stir-fries and rice pudding as in my recipe for Matcha and Clotted Cream Rice Pudding (see page 234), or simply as an accompaniment to curries and stews, for example.

I often use Japanese short-grain rice for risotto, so for a less traditional approach, try my recipe for Risotto of Japanese Mushrooms, Miso-Mascarpone and Parmesan (see page 150).

Mochi Rice Cakes

Mochi rice cake is historically a very important food in Japan and is enjoyed at any time of the year but mostly during New Year. Traditionally, mochi was made by soaking and steaming short-grain glutinous rice and then pounding it to create a mash. Nowadays, mochi is mainly processed and made from mochiko flour (glutinous rice flour).

There are many different types of mochi – the cooking varieties are called kirimochi (hard and rectangular shaped) and marumochi (fluffier and rounded). It may also refer to a number of traditional sweets including sakura mochi, flavoured with cherry blossom, and the popular daifuku mochi, both filled with sweet red bean paste (anko) and enjoyed as a dessert or snack.

Cooked mochi has a very glutinous texture that can easily stick to your throat, so be careful and do not try to swallow large pieces of it. That said, I urge you to try my recipe for Mochi Pizza with Gruyère, Wild Mushrooms and Truffle (see page 156) made using kirimochi.

HOW TO COOK SHORT-GRAIN WHITE RICE

Rice is one of the pillars of Japanese cuisine, and cooking it properly is the first step in attempting any Japanese rice dishes or as a simple accompaniment to a Japanese meal. The rice used in Japan is short-grain, and is different in appearance, texture and flavour to other varieties such as jasmine, basmati or long-grain American rice.

Measuring the correct amount of water for the rice is important. The volume of water should be equal to, or about 10 per cent more than, the volume of rice. This is measured by volume, not weight. To do this accurately I recommend you use the same cup for measuring the rice and the water. You will note that, if weighed, rice and water will give you slightly different results.

If you do not have a rice cooker, I highly recommend you get one. Do not feel you are cheating by doing so, it's been done for decades in Asia, and is the one kitchen gadget no Japanese household will do without. Good-quality rice cookers will give you perfect rice every time; it takes away all the guess work and there are a number of dishes you can use it for, not only steamed white rice.



SERVES 4

300g (10½oz/1½ cups) short-grain white rice

370ml (12½fl oz/1⅔ cups) water

1. Wash the rice in a bowl with plenty of fresh water using a circular motion with your hand. Drain the water and repeat 3 or 4 times until the water runs clear. Transfer the rice to a sieve (strainer) and let it drain for 15 minutes. Next, transfer the rice to a bowl and soak it in the measured water for 30 minutes.
2. Rice cooker method: when the soaking time is up, add the rice and soaking water to the rice cooker, close the lid and turn it on. It should take approximately 15–20 minutes to cook. Once the rice cooker's alarm beeps, let the rice rest in the unopened rice cooker for at least 15 minutes before serving.
3. Pan and hob (stove) method: choose a pan with a tightly fitting lid (preferably of glass) and with a small ventilation hole for some of the steam to escape. When the soaking time is up, add the rice and soaking water to the pan, place the lid on and bring to the boil (a glass lid will allow you to see when the water comes to the boil). As soon as it boils, turn the heat to its lowest setting and simmer gently for 15 minutes. Do not remove the lid at any stage during cooking or resting. Take off the heat and let the rice rest for a further 15 minutes before serving.

HOW TO PREPARE SUSHI RICE

Rice is the most important element in sushi. Its quality, preparation and cooking will make or break any sushi dish you attempt.

The sushi rice must be cooled and seasoned in an unvarnished wooden vessel or a sushi barrel (known as hangiri or handai in Japanese). If you do not have one, you can use a large wooden chopping (cutting) board instead. It should not be placed in glass, stainless steel or ceramics as these will ruin the texture of the rice making it too wet and sticky.

In addition, after preparing the sushi rice, do not put it in the fridge as it will harden the grains making it unpalatable. The vinegar in sushi seasoning will help preserve the rice for a few hours without refrigeration. Sushi rice should be served at room temperature.

MAKES ABOUT 600G (1LB 5OZ)

1 quantity of cooked short-grain white rice (see opposite)
4–6 tbsp sushi seasoning (see below)

For the sushi seasoning:

100ml (3½fl oz/½ cup) rice vinegar

50g (1¾oz/¼ cup) caster (superfine) sugar

½ tsp sea salt

½ tsp instant dashi powder

(or use 4–6 tbsp ready-made sushi seasoning instead, available from Japanese supermarkets)

1. Cook the short-grain white rice (see opposite).
2. If making the sushi seasoning, place all the seasoning ingredients in a pan and warm it over a low heat, stirring all the time to dissolve. Take off the heat and let it cool down to room temperature.
3. Wet the inside of an unvarnished wooden bowl, sushi barrel or the top of a wooden chopping (cutting) board, and a wooden or plastic spatula, with fresh water to prevent the rice from sticking.
4. Transfer the cooked rice to the bowl and, using the wet spatula, spread it over the entire surface of the bowl. Drizzle the sushi seasoning over the rice a little at a time.
5. Using a paper or electric fan, cool the rice while folding it, cutting through the lumps of rice as you do so but without crushing the grains.
6. Bring the rice to room temperature as quickly as possible by fanning it constantly, this should take about 5 minutes. Cover the rice with a clean damp tea towel (dish cloth) until you are ready to use it to prevent it from drying out.



JAPANESE NOODLES

Noodles are found everywhere in Japan – from noodle stands in train stations and modest neighbourhood noodle shops to elegant and expensive restaurants. You will also find them in every Japanese home where they are a staple ingredient in everyday cooking. Noodles can make for a substantial and economic meal if you are travelling in Japan on a budget.

From hearty buckwheat soba, to chewy udon, vermicelli-like somen and Chinese noodles or ramen, you are certain to find a type that will tempt you. All these noodles can be easily incorporated into home-style recipes beyond Japanese cuisine.

Ramen

Ramen noodles are Japan's ultimate comfort food. They are the country's answer to the Italian pizza, the American Mac 'n' Cheese or the British Fish & Chips. Originally from China, the Japanese quickly adopted this wheat noodle and transformed it into a national passion. The first ramen shop opened its doors in 1910, and this was followed by millions of others. Today there are magazines, books, TV shows and movies dedicated to ramen as well as social networks where 'ramen otaku' or ramen aficionados exchange information in search of the perfect bowl of noodles.

Ramen is a dish the Japanese will typically go out to enjoy rather than make at home. It is relatively inexpensive and the quality is usually outstanding. Another reason is that there are a number of elements to a bowl of ramen. For example, there are numerous toppings varying from slow-cooked pork (chashu) to seafood and vegetables, as well as three main seasonings (tare) to choose from, these can be shio (salt), shoyu (soy sauce) or miso (fermented soybean) based. And, lastly, the broth in which the noodles are dunked, can be an intricate concoction of different stock styles including primary, meat- and fish-based dashi broths (see pages 20–23).

With a little planning though, you can easily replicate excellent ramen dishes at home. To start you off, see *How To Make Ramen Noodles* on page 142. Then try making one of my ramen recipes such as *Seafood and Chorizo Ramen with Spicy Miso*, *Burnt Sweetcorn and Padron Peppers* (see page 158). This is a traditional Japanese-style ramen dish but inspired by Spanish flavours and ingredients.

For a less conventional ramen experience, make my *Sunday Roast Chicken and Miso Ramen* (see page 160).

Udon

One of my personal favourites is udon noodles. Udon is quite thick, about ½–1cm (¼–½ inch) in diameter and can be eaten hot in broths, stir-fried with other ingredients (yaki udon) and even chilled as in the classic Japanese dish zaru udon.

There are different types of udon depending on where they are made and their shape, with the most popular being sanuki udon (square shape and flat edges). The best udon is freshly made, and this is a surprisingly simple process requiring only three ingredients – flour, salt and water. Homemade udon is so much better than shop-bought, just remember to wear a clean pair of socks as you will be kneading it by foot! See *How to Make Udon Noodles* on page 142.

The next best alternative is frozen udon, and I recommend sanuki-style. Lastly, you can buy dried udon, just make sure you don't overcook them. Like the Italians with their pasta, the Japanese love their noodles al dente, known in Japanese as 'koshi'. Good-quality udon noodles have a chewy and elastic texture when cooked.

I use udon noodles in my recipe for *Udon Noodles, Truffle Butter and Parmesan* (see page 172). This is a very unconventional way of using the noodle, though it is a perfect conduit for the truffle butter or oil, as it soaks up the luxurious truffle flavours beautifully.

For a stir-fry option, try the *Beef and Udon Noodle Stir-Fry with Soy, Ginger, Tenderstem Broccoli and Cavolo Nero* (see page 164).

Soba

Touted as the healthy noodles of Japan, soba noodles are made from either 100 per cent buckwheat flour (and therefore gluten-free), or mixed with a small amount of wheat flour in various degrees. They have a caramel-greyish coloured tint, with a nutty, lightly sweet flavour.

Soba is as popular as ramen noodles, consumed as a simple and quick meal at home or at upmarket soba specialist restaurants where celebrated chefs have elevated it to an art form.

The most popular way to enjoy soba noodles, and by far my own favourite, is in the classic Japanese recipe *zaru soba* or chilled soba noodles. Soba noodles can also be flavoured with different ingredients including matcha to make green tea soba noodles. I often use these jade-coloured noodles with a strong matcha scent at home either as a major component for a Japanese-style salad or as an elegant summer starter, as in my recipe for Chilled Green Tea Soba Noodles with a Red Onion and Coriander (Cilantro) Fritter in a Cold Dashi Broth (see page 170).

Somen

A summertime staple, somen is typically enjoyed in the hot months in Japan when it is served chilled and sometimes laced in ice cubes. Like udon, it is made from wheat flour, though the similarities end there as somen is as thin as vermicelli pasta. It is cooked in about a minute making it a quick noodle to prepare.

Harusame

Another popular noodle I often use is harusame glass noodles. Made from potato starch or dried mung beans, harusame is a type of glass noodle with a firm texture and is sometimes called bean thread or cellophane noodles. It works well in stir-fries, salads and hot broths. Japanese harusame noodles are thicker and firmer than other glass noodles varieties from other countries. It has half the calories of rice or

udon noodles so is a popular choice for when you are watching your weight.

I use harusame noodles in my recipe for Crispy Duck and Glass Noodle Salad in Umeboshi Dressing (see page 162). This is a quick but zingy and refreshing salad using shop-bought Chinese crispy duck, which is then shredded and mixed with glass noodles, shaved fennel and Japanese seaweed.

Konnyaku and Shirataki Noodles

Hailing from the southern island of Okinawa, the place with the largest number of centenarians in the world, konnyaku is a jelly-like ingredient made from the pounded roots of a species of yam. Konnyaku has almost no calories, no sugar and no fat.

Konnyaku is mostly sold in block form, in either white or brown colour. In Japan it is a traditional ingredient in *Shojin Ryori* (Zen buddhist vegetarian diet) or at home cut into cubes and added to hotpots such as *oden*, or simmered with meats and soy sauce-based sauces. But there are other varieties and shapes such as shirataki noodles, fine noodles made from konnyaku block. This is by far my favourite way of eating this intriguing Japanese ingredient.

Shirataki is a wonderful ingredient – because of its shape and size it soaks up the flavour of any cooking liquor very easily, and is nearly impossible to overcook. It is virtually zero in calories, rich in fibre and makes you feel full for longer. It is often called the 'Miracle Noodle' and is my go-to ingredient whenever I am watching my weight.

Shirataki noodles are used in the classic Japanese hotpot dish *sukiyaki*. This is a robust and hearty dish I serve often at home and at Japanese supper club events, plus it featured in my *Nikkei* cookbook, so here I am introducing shirataki noodles in a different recipe. *Nikujaga* is a Japanese home-style 'beef stew', and along with *Oyakodon* (see page 40), is one of the most loved comfort foods of Japan. There are as many variations of *Nikujaga* as there are households in Japan, and it is an easy recipe to put together with only a few specialist ingredients. My recipe for *Nikujaga* (see page 166) uses shirataki noodles, beef and potatoes in a rich soy sauce broth.



HOW TO MAKE RAMEN NOODLES

SERVES 2

5g (1/8oz) bicarbonate of soda (baking soda/soda bicarbonate)

120ml (4fl oz/1/2 cup) lukewarm water

250g (9oz/2 cups) plain (all-purpose) flour

1/2 tsp fine sea salt

1. Preheat the oven to 120°C/240°F/gas mark 1/4–1/2. Place the bicarbonate of soda (baking soda) on a baking tray (sheet) and bake for 1 hour. Remove from the oven and let it cool down.

2. In a glass bowl, mix the baked bicarbonate of soda (baking soda) or kansui powder in the measured lukewarm water until completely dissolved.

3. Place the flour and salt in a large bowl and make a well in the centre. Pour the water with the bicarbonate of soda (baking soda) into the well, and with a spoon, mix well. The dough will be crumbly and it might seem as if it needs water, but do not add any, just continue mixing until it turns into a more compact dough.

4. As it becomes more evenly textured, use your hands to knead it. The dough will be rather tough, so knead it until you achieve a compact ball. Next, using a rolling pin, flatten it and fold it a number of times for 5–10 minutes. Roll it into a ball again, wrap in clingfilm (plastic wrap), and let it rest at room temperature for 1 hour.

5. Pass the rolling pin over the dough again a few times, and then divide it into 4 equal pieces. Flatten each piece with the rolling pin.

6. Using a pasta machine, flatten the dough by passing it through a few times until you have a long, thin dough. Start from the thickest setting, and then work it down to about 2mm (1/8 inch) thick. If you do

not have a pasta machine, flatten the dough as thinly as you can, then fold and slice it thinly to make the noodles.

7. On the spaghetti setting, pass the dough to cut it into noodles. Hang the noodles on a rack or place on a tray with a little flour sprinkled on them to prevent them from sticking together.

8. When ready to cook, bring a pan of water to the boil, and cook the noodles for 1–2 minutes. Drain and refresh under cold running water to eliminate the starchiness. Mix in with the soup of your choice.

HOW TO MAKE UDON NOODLES

SERVES 2

300g (10 1/2oz/2 1/2 cups) plain (all-purpose) flour, or half plain (all-purpose) and half bread flours (udonko is Japanese wheat flour used for making udon in Japan), plus 100g (3 1/2oz/3/4 cup) for dusting

15g (1/2oz/1 tbs) fine sea salt

130–160ml (4 1/2–5 1/2fl oz/1/2–1/3 cup) cold water

1. Sift the flour into a large bowl. In a bowl or cup, mix the salt into the measured water and stir well until completely dissolved.

2. Gradually mix two-thirds of the salted water into the flour. Toss the flour to moisten it evenly. The dough softness will depend largely on the room temperature, humidity and type of flour, so gradually add more salted water if necessary.

3. Press the crumbly flour mixture with your hand and form into a piece of dough. Put the dough in a large sealable food bag (roughly A4/letter paper size) and fold the bag in the middle. The dough is not smooth at this stage and it will easily break apart.

4. Using a rolling pin and the weight of your body, start kneading the dough. Gradually shift the rolling pin and spread the dough until the bag is filled. Open the bag, fold the dough up in the bag and turn it by 90 degrees. Fold the bag in the middle and repeat the kneading process around 7 to 8 times. It will take 10–15 minutes for the dough to become smooth and evenly textured. Alternatively, and this is how I do it, open a clean towel on the floor, placing the bag over it; take your shoes off and knead the dough by stepping on it with your feet (rather than using a rolling pin) 7 or 8 times as before. This is totally pain-free and is exactly how it is done in Japan.

5. Press the dough into a 3-cm (1¼-inch) thick block and let it rest in the bag for 10 minutes. This will help the dough become softer and easier to shape.

6. Face the dough down on its smooth surface, fold the edges towards the centre, being careful not to leave any air trapped in the dough. Rotate and shape the dough into a ball, place it back in the bag and let it ferment at room temperature for 1–2 hours, depending on the warmth of your kitchen.

7. On a floured work surface, knead the dough again for about 2 minutes. Lightly dust both sides with flour, then use the rolling pin to roll the dough, occasionally rotating the dough 90 degrees and dusting with flour if it starts sticking to the rolling pin or work surface. Roll the dough to a circle about 35cm (14 inches) in diameter and with an even thickness of around 5mm (¼ inch).

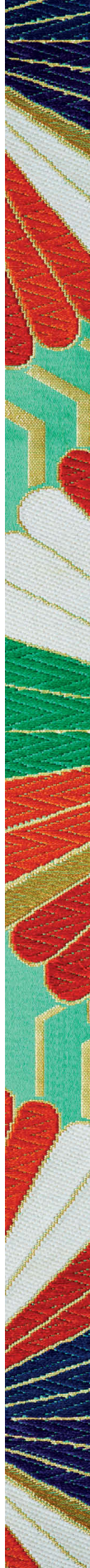
8. Fold the dough into thirds (like you would fold a letter), dusting with flour after each fold to stop it from sticking together. Place the dough horizontally in front of you and using a sharp knife, cut the dough widthwise into approximately 3-mm (⅛-inch) thick noodles. Shake off excess flour and line up the udon noodles on a baking tray (sheet).

9. The noodles will double in size after cooking them. If they stick together, gently tear the noodles off one by one with your hands before cooking.

10. To cook the noodles, fill a large pan with plenty of boiling water. Add the noodles to the pan and gently stir with chopsticks or a long fork so that the noodles do not stick to the bottom of the pan.

11. When the water comes to the boil, reduce the heat to low and cook the noodles for 10–12 minutes, stirring from time to time, until they are completely cooked. If the water starts boiling vigorously again, add some cold water. Udon noodles are not cooked al dente, but they should not be cooked to a mush either – they should be springy, lightly firm and chewy. Test doneness by picking a strand of udon noodle, immersing it in cold water in a small bowl and biting into it to assess whether the texture is right.

12. Drain the noodles in a large colander, rinsing under cold running water until they are completely cold. Drain well. They can be re-heated in a broth, stir-fried or served cold. They freeze well too after the initial cooking, then cook from frozen.



SOY MILK, TOFU AND BYPRODUCTS

Making soy milk and tofu could not be easier, but why should you make your own? Because as with every ingredient, you want to taste them at their very best – sweet, creamy and fresh. Making your own soy milk and tofu is fun, you will get an infinitely better product and just like baking your own bread, it will give you a great feeling of achievement.

Soy Milk

Homemade soy milk should only require two ingredients, soybeans and water – see *How To Make Soy Milk* on page 146. Adding a third ingredient, a coagulant such as nigari or gypsum will give you homemade tofu. Making your own soy milk also means that you can choose the best ingredients – organic and non-gmo soybeans and spring mineral water. If you compare this to commercial soy milk, you will be surprised to see anything between 6 and 10 different ingredients including flavourings and e-numbers and a soybean extract of less than 8 per cent in most cases.

Another major advantage of making homemade soy milk (and tofu) is that it will give you okara (soybean lees) and yuba (soy milk skin) that can be used in other recipes such as *Okara Stir-Fry with French Beans, Carrots and Shiitake Mushrooms* (see page 178).

Tofu

It baffles me why tofu is so disregarded in the West when it is loved by both rich and poor in Japan. Tofu is a staple food in the national diet with a number of restaurants specializing solely in the ingredient. I love it so much, one of my dogs is called Tofu!

Tofu is made from curdled soybean milk and comes in many different textures, shapes and sizes. See *How To Make Firm Tofu* on page 147.

You can use different types of coagulant to turn your soy milk into tofu, from lemon juice or vinegar to nigari, gypsum or even Epsom salts – each will impart a different texture and flavour to the final product. My preferred coagulant is nigari, followed by gypsum and then Epsom salts. You can also flavour your homemade tofu with citrus oil, herbs or spices

The main varieties of tofu are firm (cotton), silken (soft) and pudding (very soft) with many different gradations within this range. Fresh tofu usually comes as a block immersed in water, but it can also come dried, fermented, smoked, freeze-dried (koya dofu), pressed, in fine skin (yuba) and deep-fried (abura-age).

I use firm tofu to create a Japanese-style *Mabo Dofu*, a classic Sichuanese dish of tofu topped with a spicy minced (ground) pork sauce but here given Japanese flavours (see page 176).

Yuba and Okara

Making your own soy milk also means that you create two other ingredients in the process – yuba (tofu skin) and okara (leftover soybean pulp). Yuba is considered a delicacy in Japan, particularly around Kyoto. It is the thin veil that forms on the surface of soy milk as the fat and protein rise to the surface. Yuba has an amazing texture and mouth feel, similar to burrata when fresh (nama-yuba).

Sadly, I have never found either fresh or dried Japanese yuba outside of their home country. That said, you can still get a taste of fresh yuba at home if you make your own soy milk (see page 146), as the yuba will naturally form (although in small quantities). Collect the yuba with a chopstick and enjoy it with a tiny amount of soy or Ponzu Sauce (see page 248).

Though a slightly different ingredient, you can find dried tofu skin known as 'dou pi' in Mandarin in Chinese supermarkets. They are usually sold as sheets, sticks and knots and are a great addition to Asian stews and hotpots or used as wrapping for dim sum dumplings and other ingredients.

Okara is the soybean pulp left over after you press the milk out of the crushed soybeans; but unlike yuba, you will be left with plenty of it. In Japan, okara is bought very inexpensively in supermarkets and from tofu makers, and is used in a number of dishes.

Okara is very nutritious, containing soluble and non-soluble fibre, protein, calcium and other minerals. And because of all the fibre, it is even more nutritious than soy milk or tofu. Okara resembles cooked couscous in texture but with a faint soybean flavour. It has a short shelf life so you will need to either use it up, freeze it or dry it in your oven at a low temperature until it turns to coarse flour. You can find dry okara in most Japanese grocery stores.

There are dozens of ways to use okara in your everyday cooking including as a base for baked goods such as biscuits (cookies), muffins, breads and cakes. Dried okara flour adds great lightness and texture to baked goods as well as making them gluten-free. It is also a useful binding agent and is popular in cold salads and stir-fries.

In this chapter, I introduce okara as it is mostly enjoyed in Japan, in a stir-fry known as unohana. I remember vividly the first time I tried this dish while living in Japan, and am happy to include it here, so do try my recipe for Unohana – Okara Stir-Fry with French Beans, Carrots and Shiitake Mushrooms (see page 178).

Firm tofu freshly made from soybeans, water and nigari coagulant.



HOW TO MAKE SOY MILK

MAKES 1-2 LITRES (1¾-3½ PINTS/4-8 CUPS)

500g (1lb 2oz) dry soybeans
3.5 litres (6 pints/14¾ cups) filtered water (ratio 1:7), plus water for soaking

1. Wash the dry soybeans in a colander under running water, then drain and transfer to a lidded bowl. Add enough water to cover the beans by about 5cm (2 inches), cover the bowl and let the beans soak at room temperature for 8-12 hours or overnight.

2. Drain the soybeans, discarding the water. Place the soybeans and filtered water in a blender. Blend vigorously for a couple of minutes to grind the beans and until you get a thick, foamy and white liquid akin to a milkshake.

3. Pass this mixture through a sieve (strainer) lined with muslin (cheesecloth) into a large pan, separating the pulp from the uncooked milk. You will end up with a pan of uncooked soy milk and a bowl full of soybean pulp, known as okara in Japan. Okara can be used in a number of recipes, so do not throw it away. Place it in a sealable food bag, refrigerate and use within 3 days. Alternatively, divide it up into smaller food bags and freeze it – it will keep in the freezer for up to 6 months. Defrost it before using.

4. Bring the soy milk to the boil, turn down the heat and simmer for 8-10 minutes, scraping the bottom of the pan with a rubber spatula to avoid scorching. Keep an eye on it, as you do not want the milk to boil over. If a frothy foam/skin forms over the top, skim it off. The skin that forms, known as yuba in Japanese, is a delicacy, and can be eaten in dishes or on its own with a little Ponzu Sauce (see page 248).

5. The soy milk is now ready to be used for drinking, cooking with or for making tofu (see opposite). Soy milk can be refrigerated for up to 5 days.



HOW TO MAKE FIRM TOFU

MAKES ABOUT 400G (14OZ)

3 litres (5¼ pints/12¾ cups) soy milk (see opposite)
1½ tsp nigari coagulant, or 3 tsp gypsum or Epsom salt
coagulants
120ml (4fl oz/½ cup) warm filtered water

*Required equipment: Tofu press or fine metal sieve
(strainer) or colander*

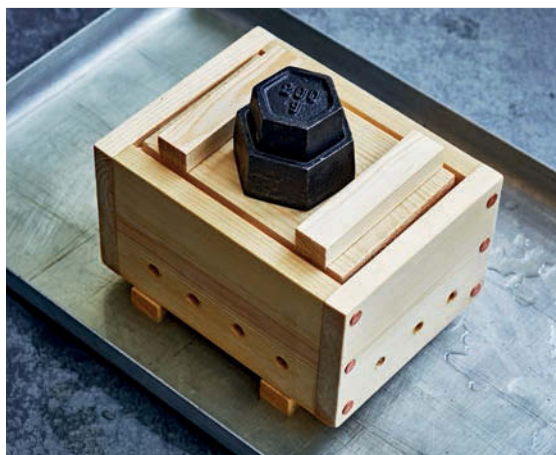
1. After simmering the soy milk (step 4, left), turn the heat off and let the soy milk cool down for 5 minutes.

2. Meanwhile, dissolve the coagulant in the measured warm water. Add the coagulant to the milk, stir gently and let it curdle, which will take approximately 15 minutes.

3. Line a tofu press mould or similar suitable container such as a colander with muslin (cheesecloth) and place inside a deep roasting tin (pan). Ladle the curds and some of the whey into the mould. Fold the muslin (cheesecloth) over the curd and place the top of the press over it. Now place a heavy object over the top – the heavier the object and the longer you press down on the tofu, the firmer it will be. A 500g (1lb 2oz) weight applied over 15 minutes will give you medium tofu, while a 1kg (2¼lb) weight over 20 minutes will make for firmer tofu.

4. Open the muslin (cheesecloth) and press the surface with your finger to gauge the texture, it may feel rather soft but the tofu will become firmer as it cools down. Very gently remove the tofu block from the muslin (cheesecloth) and lower it into a bowl filled with cold water, letting it soak for 5 minutes. Drain, and use the tofu as required.

5. The tofu will keep in the fridge, submerged in water, for up to a week. Change the water every other day.



そぼろご飯

SERVES 8

2 quantities of steamed white rice (see page 138)

For the pork soboro (1st colour)

2 tbsp sesame oil
300g (10½oz) minced (ground) pork
2.5cm (1 inch) cube of root ginger, washed, unpeeled and grated
50ml (2fl oz/¼ cup) sake
50ml (2fl oz/¼ cup) mirin
100ml (3½fl oz/scant ½ cup) soy sauce
2 tsp caster (superfine) sugar

For the scrambled eggs (2nd colour)

1 tbsp sunflower oil
2 eggs
1 tsp soy sauce, preferably light soy sauce (usukuchi shoyu)
pinch of sea salt
1 tbsp caster (superfine) sugar

For the green vegetable and red ginger (3rd and 4th colours)

50g (1¾oz) mangetout
50g (1¾oz) red pickled ginger (Japanese beni shoga)

SOBORO GOHAN

Japanese Four-Coloured Rice with Pork, Greens, Eggs and Pickled Ginger

SHORT-GRAIN RICE | RED PICKLED GINGER | SOY SAUCE | MIRIN | SAKE | SESAME OIL

A festive rice dish, Soboro Gohan is easy to make and looks great. Soboro refers to minced (ground) pork or chicken which is slow-cooked in soy sauce, ginger, sugar and sake until most of the liquid has evaporated, so it is strongly flavoured and a perfect topping for rice. This rice is normally made with three different coloured toppings but I have been greedy and added a fourth. All elements of this dish can be prepared in advance and put together just before serving.

1. Cook the white rice (see page 138). Keep it warm.
2. To prepare the pork soboro, heat the sesame oil in a pan, add the rest of the pork soboro ingredients and simmer for 20–30 minutes until most of the liquid has evaporated. Take off the heat and let it cool down to room temperature.
3. While the meat is cooking, prepare the scrambled eggs. Heat the sunflower oil in a non-stick frying pan (skillet). Mix all the other ingredients together in a bowl, add to the pan and scramble the egg mixture until thoroughly cooked but still retaining some moisture. Turn off the heat, transfer the scrambled egg to a chopping (cutting) board and chop very finely. Place in a sealable container and set aside.
4. Cook the mangetout for 30 seconds in salted boiling water, remove from the pan and plunge into chilled water. Drain, pat dry and slice finely on the diagonal. Place in an airtight container and refrigerate until needed. Drain the red pickled ginger strands from its pickling vinegar.
5. The rice can be served hot or at room temperature. For hot soboro rice, re-heat all the ingredients, except the mangetout and pickled ginger, in a microwave.
6. To serve, wet a wooden spoon with water and use it to spread out the steamed rice evenly in a serving bowl; the rice should cover the surface of the bowl with a layer about 3–5cm (1¼–2 inches) deep. Spread a thin layer of the pork soboro mixture over one half of the rice. Scatter the slices of mangetout alongside the pork mixture, forming a neat line about 2cm (¾ inch) wide. Make another neat line by the mangetout using the red pickled ginger.
7. Finally, add the scrambled eggs to the remaining rice surface. For a lovely presentation, there should not be any cross over of ingredients among the 4 areas but the entire rice surface should be covered by the ingredients. Serve.



RISOTTO OF JAPANESE MUSHROOMS, MISO-MASCARPONE AND PARMESAN

with Japanese Short-Grain Rice

SERVES 4

6 dried shiitake mushrooms (or porcini)
1 tsp granulated sugar
1 dashi infusion bag or 1 tsp instant dashi powder (optional)
1 litre (1¾ pints/4 cups) hot water
300g (10½oz/1½ cups) short-grain white rice
100g (3½oz) mascarpone cheese
75g (2¾oz/¼ cup) white miso (shiro miso)
50g (1¾oz/¼ cup) unsalted butter
1 onion, chopped
150g (5½oz) Japanese mushrooms (a selection including fresh shiitake, maitake, oyster, king or shimeji), wiped clean and chopped into bite-sized pieces
fine sea salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
50g (1¾oz) Parmesan cheese, finely grated
micro basil, to garnish

MUSHROOMS | SHORT-GRAIN RICE | DASHI | MISO

Japanese short-grain rice is a versatile ingredient that works brilliantly in dishes such as rice pudding (see page 234) and risotto. Here we use white miso and mascarpone with a medley of Japanese mushrooms to create an umami-laden risotto that is creamy, rich and full of flavour.

1. Add the dried shiitake mushrooms, sugar and dashi infusion bag or instant dashi powder, if using, to a bowl. Pour the measured hot water over and mix well. Leave the mushrooms to soak for 30 minutes.
2. Wash the rice in a bowl with plenty of fresh water using a circular motion with your hand. Drain the water and repeat 3 or 4 times until the water runs clear. Transfer the rice to a sieve (strainer) and let it drain for 15 minutes. Meanwhile, mix the mascarpone and white miso until well combined.
3. Squeeze out the water from the rehydrated mushrooms, reserving the soaking liquid. Slice the rehydrated mushrooms finely. Transfer the soaking liquid to a clean pan, being careful to leave any mushroom residue or grit in the bowl. Heat the liquid until very hot, then lower the heat, cover the pan and keep it simmering until needed.
4. In a pan large enough to cook the risotto, add half of the butter and the chopped onion and fry for 2 minutes until just translucent but not coloured.
5. Add the drained rice and fry for a couple of minutes or until it is coated in the butter and onions. Now start adding a couple of ladles of hot mushroom-dashi stock to the rice. Use a spatula to scrape the bottom of the pan, and as the liquid is soaked up by the rice add more broth a ladle at a time and mix. After a few minutes, add the sliced rehydrated mushrooms. Continue adding more stock and mixing for exactly 15 minutes until the rice is cooked but slightly al dente. You may not need to use all the mushroom dashi stock.
6. Meanwhile, in a separate pan, heat the remaining butter and fry the fresh mushrooms for a few minutes until softened and light coloured, season with sea salt and black pepper.
7. Just before the 15 minutes are up, add the miso-mascarpone mix to the rice and stir until completely dissolved. Add the fried mushrooms, a generous pinch of sea salt and some black pepper. Check for seasoning and add a little more salt or pepper if needed. To serve, ladle the risotto into 4 bowls, sprinkle the Parmesan over the rice and top with the micro basil. Serve immediately.



枝豆ご飯

SERVES 4–6

300g (10½oz/1½ cups)
short-grain rice
200g (7oz/1¾ cups) frozen
edamame, shelled
50g (1¾oz) mangetout
2 tbsp finely sliced spring
onions (scallions)
2 tbsp finely chopped chives
2 tbsp unsalted butter,
melted
1 tbsp toasted sesame oil
1 tbsp toasted white sesame
seeds

For the cooking broth

300ml (10fl oz/1¼ cups)
Primary Dashi (see page
20) or 300ml (10fl oz/
1¼ cups) dashi prepared
from a good-quality dashi
infusion bag, or lastly from
1 tsp instant dashi powder
dissolved in 300ml
(10fl oz/1¼ cups) hot
water
2 tbsp mirin
2 tbsp light soy sauce
(usukuchi shoyu)

EDAMAME GOHAN

Rice with Edamame Beans, Mangetout and Spring Onions
(Scallions)

EDAMAME BEANS | SHORT-GRAIN RICE | DASHI | LIGHT SOY SAUCE | MIRIN | SESAME OIL

Edamame beans are green soybeans that are usually cooked in their pods and eaten as a snack with beer in Japan. Here, I use the bean and other greens to make edamame rice cooked in a dashi and soy sauce-based broth. A fragrant, springtime dish.

1. Wash the rice in a bowl with plenty of fresh water using a circular motion with your hand. Drain the water and repeat 3 or 4 times until the water runs clear. Transfer the rice to a sieve (strainer) and let it drain for 15 minutes. Make the Primary Dashi (see page 20) or dashi stock with a dashi infusion bag or instant powder.
2. Prepare the cooking broth by combining the dashi stock, mirin and soy sauce in a bowl and set aside until it has completely cooled down. Next, transfer the rice to the bowl with the cooking broth and soak the rice for 30 minutes.
3. Rice cooker method: when the soaking time is up, add the rice and soaking liquid to the rice cooker, close the lid and turn it on. It should take approximately 15–20 minutes to cook. Once the rice cooker's alarm beeps, let the rice rest in the unopened rice cooker for at least 15 minutes before serving.
4. Pan and hob (stove) method: choose a pan with a tightly fitting lid (preferably of glass) and with a ventilation hole for some of the steam to escape. When the soaking time is up, add the rice and soaking liquid to the pan, place the lid on and bring to the boil (a glass lid will allow you to see when the water comes to a boil). As soon as it boils, turn the heat to its lowest setting and simmer gently for 15 minutes. Do not remove the lid at any stage during cooking or resting. Take off the heat and let the rice rest for a further 15 minutes before serving.
5. While the rice is cooking, prepare the remaining ingredients. Bring a pan filled with water to the boil, add the edamame and simmer for 5 minutes until tender, then remove from the pan. Blanch the mangetout in the same boiling water for 30 seconds, then plunge into a bowl of cold water to stop them from cooking further. Slice half the mangetout into 1-cm (½-inch) thick diagonal slices and the other half into very fine slices. Set aside the thin slices.
6. Once the rice has rested, open the rice cooker or pan, add the edamame, thick mangetout slices, spring onions (scallions), chives, butter and sesame oil and mix thoroughly.
7. Place the edamame rice in a serving bowl, top with the thinly sliced mangetout and a sprinkle of toasted white sesame seeds and serve.



ひじきご飯

SERVES 4

350ml (12fl oz/1½ cups)
Primary Dashi (see page 20) or 350ml (12fl oz/1½ cups) dashi prepared from a good-quality dashi infusion bag or lastly from 1½ tsp instant dashi powder dissolved in 350ml (12fl oz/1½ cups) hot water

15g (½oz) dried hijiki seaweed

320g (11oz/1¼ cups) short-grain white rice

2–3 pieces of abura-age tofu (available in Japanese grocery stores or online)

1 small carrot

40ml (1½fl oz/3 tbsp) mirin

40ml (1½fl oz/3 tbsp) light soy sauce (usukuchi shoyu)

½ tbsp granulated sugar

1 tbsp toasted sesame oil, optional

2 spring onion (scallion) stems, sliced thinly on the diagonal

HIJIKI, CARROTS AND ABURA-AGE TOFU RICE

in a Light Dashi

HIJIKI SEAWEED | ABURA-AGE TOFU | DASHI | LIGHT SOY SAUCE | MIRIN

If you have not tried hijiki seaweed before, this is a great recipe to get you started. This intriguing seaweed grows wild in the rocky coastlines of Japan, China and Korea. It has a distinct mineral flavour of the sea, and is traditionally paired with carrots and deep-fried abura-age tofu as in this rice recipe.

1. Make the Primary Dashi (see page 20) or dashi stock with a dashi infusion bag or instant powder. Soak the hijiki in a bowl of warm water for at least 30 minutes, then drain and set aside.
2. Wash the rice in a bowl with plenty of fresh water using a circular motion with your hand. Drain the water and repeat 3 or 4 times until the water runs clear. Transfer the rice to a sieve (strainer) and let it drain for 15 minutes. Cut the abura-age tofu into thin 4-cm (1½-inch) long slices. Peel and slice the carrot into julienne sticks about the same size as the abura-age. Set both aside.
3. Make the cooking broth by combining the dashi stock, mirin, soy sauce and sugar in a bowl, and mix well until the sugar is completely dissolved. Next, add the rice to the cooking broth and soak the rice in this mixture for 30 minutes.
4. Rice cooker method: when the soaking time is up, add the rice and soaking liquid to the rice cooker bowl, top with the drained hijiki, carrots and abura-age, but do not mix the ingredients into the rice at this stage as this will stop the rice from cooking evenly. Close the lid and turn the rice cooker on. It should take approximately 20 minutes to cook. Once the rice cooker's alarm beeps, let the rice rest in the unopened rice cooker for at least 15 minutes before opening the lid.
5. Pan and hob (stove) method: choose a pan with a tightly fitting lid (preferably of glass) and with a small ventilation hole for some of the steam to escape. When the soaking time is up, add the rice and soaking liquid to the pan, top with the hijiki, carrots and abura-age, but do not stir them into the rice. Place the lid on and bring to the boil (a glass lid will allow you to see when the water comes to the boil). As soon as it boils, turn the heat to its lowest setting and simmer gently for 15 minutes. Do not remove the lid at any stage during cooking or resting. Take off the heat and let the rice rest for 15 minutes before removing the lid.
6. When the rice is ready, drizzle the toasted sesame oil, if using, over the rice. Use a wooden or plastic spatula to mix and fluff the rice with the other ingredients. Use a slicing motion to turn the rice and ingredients together, making sure not to mush the rice. Serve immediately with the sliced spring onion (scallions) on top.



MOCHI PIZZA WITH GRUYÈRE, WILD MUSHROOMS AND TRUFFLE

Mochi Glutinous Rice Pizza Crust with Three Cheeses

SERVES 2

100g (3½oz) ricotta cheese
4 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
100g (3½oz) Japanese mushroom selection such as maitake, oyster, king and shiitake, wiped clean and cut into small bite-sized pieces
½ white onion, peeled and sliced lengthways
4 blocks (50g/1¾oz each) of hard mochi (kirimochi or kakumochi), cut into 1-cm (½-inch) square pieces
100g (3½oz) Gruyère cheese, grated
20g (¾oz) aged Parmesan cheese shavings
1 tbsp good-quality truffle oil
fine sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

MOCHI | JAPANESE MUSHROOMS

A tongue-in-cheek but delectable use of Japanese mochi rice cakes, which are traditionally eaten in soups or grilled to celebrate the New Year in Japan. Completely gluten-free, the rice cake will be crispy on the outside while the inside will melt with the ricotta and Gruyère cheeses turning into one big cheesy crust. I really cannot think of a more delicious way to try Japanese mochi rice cakes!

1. Preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F/gas mark 6. In a bowl, mix the ricotta with 1 tablespoon of olive oil until well combined. Season with sea salt and black pepper to taste. Set aside.
2. Heat 1 tablespoon of olive oil in an ovenproof, non-stick frying pan (skillet) over a medium heat. Fry the mushrooms for a few minutes until lightly coloured, seasoning them with sea salt and black pepper as they fry. Transfer the fried mushrooms to a bowl and set aside. In the same pan, heat another tablespoon of olive oil and fry the onion slices for a few minutes until translucent and lightly softened but not coloured. Lightly season them, then transfer to a bowl until needed.
3. Still in the same pan, heat the final tablespoon of olive oil, and arrange the mochi pieces close together in the middle of the pan in a circular shape. As the mochi cooks, the pieces will melt and bind together forming the pizza crust. Use a wooden spatula to gently press the mochi pieces together into a round shape.
4. Gently brown the mochi for 2 minutes; when the bottom of the mochi crust begins to stick to the pan, flip the mochi over and flatten it lightly with the spatula to spread it out. Continue flipping and spreading the crust out every minute or so until both sides are lightly browned and crispy, this should take another 5–6 minutes.
5. Using a spoon, spread the ricotta cheese mixture over the mochi crust, then top it with the fried onions, mushrooms and grated Gruyère cheese. Transfer the frying pan (skillet) to the preheated oven and bake for 7–10 minutes until the Gruyère cheese is completely melted and golden. If you like the cheese a tad more caramelized, you can put it under a hot grill (broiler) for a couple of minutes, but keep an eye on it so it does not burn.
6. Remove the pizza from the oven or grill (broiler), top with the shavings of Parmesan cheese and a generous drizzle of truffle oil. Serve immediately.



SERVES 4

2 quantities of Ramen
Noodles (see page 142) or
400g (14oz) dried ramen

For the broth

1½ quantities of Meat-based
Dashi (see page 23) or
chicken stock
1 thumb-sized piece of root
ginger, sliced
3 dried shiitake mushrooms

For the seasoning ('tare')

100g (3½oz/scant ½ cup)
barley or brown miso
75ml (2¾fl oz/⅓ cup) soy
sauce
75ml (2¾fl oz/⅓ cup) mirin
2 garlic cloves, crushed
2 red Jalapeño chillies, finely
chopped

For the toppings

8 fresh prawns (shrimp)
2 tbsp soy sauce
2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
juice of ½ lemon
1 garlic clove, crushed
1 sweetcorn cob
2 spring onions (scallions)
2 red tomatoes
1 lime
8 Spanish Padron peppers
2 tbsp toasted sesame oil
4 spicy chorizo sausages,
cut in half lengthways
240g (8½oz) beansprouts
3 shiitake mushrooms
(reserved from the broth)
drizzle of La Yu chilli oil
sprinkle each of shichimi
pepper and toasted white
sesame seeds

SEAFOOD AND CHORIZO RAMEN

with Spicy Miso, Burnt Sweetcorn and Padron Peppers

RAMEN NOODLES | BARLEY MISO | MEAT DASHI | SHIITAKE MUSHROOMS | SOY SAUCE | MIRIN | SESAME OIL AND SEEDS

This is a spicy and wholesome ramen dish using earthy barley miso, dashi and some Spanish flavours such as chorizo and Padron peppers. Add more Jalapeño chillies or La Yu chilli oil, if desired.

1. Make the Ramen Noodles (see page 142) and Meat-based Dashi (see page 23), if using. Prepare a large pan of unsalted boiling water.
2. Place the dashi or stock, ginger and dried shiitake mushrooms in a stockpot. Bring to the boil, cover the pan and simmer for 20 minutes. Strain the stock into a pan, discarding the ginger, and keep warm. Remove the mushroom stems and slice the caps. Set aside as they will be used as a topping.
3. Prepare the seasoning (tare) by whisking all the seasoning ingredients thoroughly in a bowl until the miso is completely dissolved. Set aside. Now prepare all the toppings. Marinate the prawns (shrimp) for 30 minutes in the soy sauce, olive oil, lemon juice and garlic. Cook the sweetcorn in salted boiling water for 10 minutes, remove, cool down and pat dry. Char the cob on all sides over a gas burner set to a high heat. Standing the cob upright, slice down its length, turning the cob 4–5 times to give you strips of charred corn. Keep warm. Slice the spring onions (scallions), cut the tomatoes into 8 wedges and the lime into 4 wedges.
4. Heat a griddle pan until hot. Fry the Padron peppers until blistered, remove from the pan and keep warm. Add half the sesame oil to the pan and the chorizo sausages, cook on both sides until beautifully coloured and the oil rendered. Keep warm. Drain the chorizo oil into another container, and wipe clean the griddle pan. Drizzle the remaining sesame oil into the pan, heat and add the prawns (shrimp) and cook for 2 minutes on each side, then keep warm.
5. Cook the Ramen Noodles in the boiling water – 1–2 minutes for fresh or follow the packet instructions for dry. The noodles should be on the firmer side of al dente as they will continue cooking in the hot broth. Drain the noodles. Mix the broth and seasoning (tare) together well and check for seasoning, adding more miso, soy sauce or chicken stock if necessary. The stock should be highly flavoursome and strong.
6. Divide the noodles between 4 hot serving bowls followed by the miso broth. Now add all the vegetable toppings, the griddled chorizo and prawns (shrimp), then a generous drizzle of the rendered chorizo oil and La Yu chilli oil. Finish with a sprinkle of shichimi pepper and sesame seeds. Serve.



SERVES 4

For the chicken stock

2.5 litres (4 pints/10 cups)
cold water
1 roast chicken carcass
1 onion, thinly sliced
1 carrot, thinly sliced
2cm (¾ inch) piece of root
ginger, finely sliced
5–10 coriander (cilantro)
roots, lightly crushed
½ tsp sea salt and a few
lightly crushed black
peppercorns

For the ramen

2 eggs
2 quantities of Ramen
noodles (see page 142) or
250g (9oz) ready-made
dried ramen noodles or
450g (1lb) fresh ramen
noodles
50g (1¾oz) mangetout
150g (5½oz) brown miso
2 bok choy, cut into 8 long
quarters
2 red chillies, sliced
diagonally
100g (3½oz) carrots,
shredded into matchsticks
2 spring onions (scallions),
very finely sliced
4 tbsp coriander (cilantro)
leaves, roughly chopped
2–3 tbsp soy sauce
250g (9oz) leftover roast
chicken meat
4 tsp toasted sesame oil
2 tsp white sesame seeds
pinch of shredded red chilli
shichimi pepper or La Yu
chilli oil, to sprinkle
1 lemon, cut into quarters

SUNDAY ROAST CHICKEN AND MISO RAMEN

**RAMEN NOODLES | MISO | SESAME OIL AND SEEDS |
SHICHIMI PEPPER | LA YU CHILLI OIL | SOY SAUCE |
ITOKIRI TOGARASHI**

A great way to use up a leftover Sunday roast chicken carcass, but don't forget to save a little roast chicken meat to add to this ramen. An all-in-one dish, the miso will add depth of flavour and any combination of vegetables can also work. Sunday chicken roast turns into Monday evening ramen!

1. Hard-boil the eggs, then peel and cut in half. Make the Ramen Noodles (see page 142), if using. To make the chicken stock, place all the stock ingredients in a large pan, bring to the boil and simmer for 30 minutes, skimming off any impurities. Strain the stock into a clean pan big enough to take all the other ingredients, and set aside. The stock can be made a couple of days in advance and kept in the fridge.
2. Blanch the mangetout in a large pan filled with boiling water for 30 seconds, quickly scoop them out of the pan, reserving the water to cook the noodles, and plunge them into cold water to stop them from cooking. Drain and pat dry. Bring the water back to the boil, add the Ramen Noodles and cook for about 1 minute if using fresh noodles, or longer if using dry noodles, following the packet instructions. Drain and refresh under cold running water.
3. When ready to serve, bring the stock to the boil and add the miso paste. Using a whisk, mix it vigorously so that the miso is completely dissolved in the stock. You may find it easier to mix the miso paste with a few tablespoons of the hot stock in a small bowl, and then add this to the pan. Now add the bok choy, red chillies and carrot as well as half the spring onion (scallion) and coriander (cilantro), and cook for 1 minute.
4. Add the cooked ramen noodles to one side of the pan to heat them through; it will only take a minute. Check for seasoning and add a little soy sauce if needed (miso saltiness varies from type used and from brand to brand). Just before serving, add the leftover roast chicken to a corner of the pan without mixing it into the noodles to warm it through.
5. Dish the ramen and vegetables equally among 4 bowls, topping each mound of ramen noodles with pieces of chicken, half a hard-boiled egg, the mangetout and the remaining spring onions (scallions) and coriander (cilantro). Drizzle a little toasted sesame oil over the dish, and serve with a generous sprinkle of white sesame seeds and shredded red chilli (itokiri togarashi), shichimi pepper and a wedge of lemon.



SERVES 4

For the umeboshi dressing

4 umeboshi, pitted and finely chopped (or 2 tbsp umeboshi paste)
zest of 1 lemon
3–4 tbsp lemon juice
½ shallot, finely diced
2 tbsp caster (superfine) sugar
2½ tbsp light soy sauce (usukuchi shoyu)
1 tbsp toasted sesame oil

For the salad

¼ Chinese crispy aromatic duck, shop-bought (just over 100g/3½oz meat)
4 tbsp kaiso seaweed mix
35g (1¼oz) mangetout, tailed
50g (1¾oz) harusame glass noodles
½ fennel, thinly sliced
½ large cucumber, deseeded and sliced into ribbons with a vegetable peeler
4 tbsp coriander (cilantro) leaves
½ shallot, thinly sliced
16 red seedless grapes, halved
4 tbsp spring onions (scallions), finely sliced

To garnish

micro basil and edible flowers (optional)
generous sprinkle of toasted white sesame seeds
generous sprinkle of Maldon sea salt flakes

CRISPY DUCK AND GLASS NOODLE SALAD

in Umeboshi Dressing

HARUSAME GLASS NOODLE | UMEBOSHI | KAISO SEAWEED MIX

This colourful and zingy salad uses three important Japanese ingredients – harusame glass noodles, umeboshi pickled plums and kaiso seaweed mix. Simple to make, it has great freshness, flavours and textures.

1. To make the umeboshi dressing put all the ingredients in a bowl and whisk vigorously to combine. Check for seasoning – depending on the time of year, lemons are sweeter or more acidic, so adjust by adding a little more sugar, lemon juice or umeboshi until you get a zingy, flavoursome and refreshing dressing. Refrigerate until ready to use. The dressing will keep for a few days in the fridge.
2. Roast the Chinese crispy aromatic duck, skin side up, following the packet instructions. This should take approximately 30 minutes at 200°C/400°F/gas mark 6. Remove from the oven, let it cool down and, using your hands, tear the meat into chunky shreds. Set aside.
3. In a bowl, rehydrate the kaiso seaweed mix in plenty of cold water for 10 minutes. Drain and squeeze out the excess water with your hands. Pat dry in a clean tea towel (dish cloth).
4. In a pan of boiling water, cook the mangetout for 30 seconds, remove from the pan with a slotted spoon (reserving the water) and plunge into a bowl of iced water. Once cooled, pat dry in a clean tea towel (dish cloth) and cut them in half.
5. In the same pan and boiling water, cook the harusame noodles following the packet instructions. This should take 3–4 minutes. Rinse the noodles under fresh running water until they are completely cold and drain them through a colander. Using a pair of scissors, cut the noodles into roughly 5cm (2 inch) lengths.
6. Add the harusame noodles and fennel to a large mixing bowl, add two-thirds of the umeboshi dressing and mix well. Add most of the remaining salad ingredients and gently fold them in until they are roughly combined. I like to keep a tiny bit of each ingredient to place on top of the dish as a finishing touch.
7. Transfer the salad to a serving platter, drizzle on the remaining umeboshi dressing, scatter the reserved ingredients over the dish and top with the micro basil leaves, edible flowers and a generous sprinkle of toasted white sesame seeds and sea salt flakes. Serve.



BEEF AND UDON NOODLE STIR-FRY

with Soy, Ginger, Tenderstem Broccoli and Cavolo Nero

SERVES 4

2 quantities of fresh udon noodles (see page 142) or 500g (1lb 2oz) frozen udon noodles or 250g (9oz) good-quality dried udon noodles

For the beef and marinade

200g (7oz) rump steak
2 tbsp soy sauce
1 tsp granulated sugar
2cm (¾ inch) piece of root ginger, peeled and finely grated
2 garlic cloves, crushed
½ tsp freshly ground black pepper

For the stir-fry

1 tbsp sesame oil
3 tbsp soy sauce
1 tbsp water
200g (7oz) tenderstem broccoli, cut into bite-sized pieces
2 tbsp sunflower oil
125g (4oz) white onion, sliced
200g (7oz) cavolo nero cabbage, stem discarded, leaves roughly chopped
pinch of crushed chilli (dried red pepper) flakes
1 tbsp toasted white sesame seeds (optional)

UDON NOODLES | SOY SAUCE | GINGER | SESAME OIL AND SEEDS

Now you have made your own Udon Noodles (see page 142), why not try this super-quick beef and udon stir-fry? It is a doddle to make, requiring just a single rump steak, plenty of green veggies and noodles that will feed up to four!

I love the way meat is consumed in Asian food cultures; a little goes a long way. The beef is marinated in soy sauce, sugar, ginger and garlic and has tons of flavour. As with all stir-fries, have all the ingredients ready before you heat that wok!

1. Make the Udon Noodles (see page 142), or use good quality ready-made frozen or dried udon noodles.
2. Cut the rump steak very thinly into 5-cm (2-inch) long slices (freezing the steak for 30 minutes beforehand will help). Transfer to a bowl and mix well with the soy sauce, sugar, ginger, garlic and black pepper until thoroughly combined. Let it marinate for 30–60 minutes.
3. In a small bowl, mix the sesame oil, soy sauce and water until combined. Set aside until needed.
4. Bring a large pan of salted water to the boil. Add the udon noodles to the pan and cook for about 10–12 minutes if using fresh, or follow the packet instructions for frozen or dry noodles. Keeping the water in the pan, fish out the noodles into a colander and refresh under fresh cold water to eliminate starchiness and stop them from cooking. Let them drain. Add the broccoli to the pan and cook for 1 minute, then remove from the pan and drain.
5. Meanwhile, add the sunflower oil to a large wok and heat it through on the highest heat until smoking hot. Add the beef, its marinade and the onion to the wok and cook, stirring constantly, for 1 minute. Add the broccoli and cavolo nero and cook for a further 30 seconds.
6. Next, add the cooked noodles to the wok, stirring them together with the other ingredients for a couple of minutes until just heated through. Finally, stir in the soy sauce and sesame oil mixture, add a generous pinch of chilli (dried red pepper) flakes, mix well and turn off the heat. Serve immediately with a sprinkle of toasted white sesame seeds, if using.



肉じゃが

SERVES 4

1 litre (1¾ pints/4 cups)
Primary Dashi (see page 20) or use a good-quality dashi infusion bag infused in 1 litre (1¾ pints/4 cups) of hot water, and follow packet instructions

250g (9oz) beef steak for sukiyaki (very thin slices of usually sirloin or beef shoulder, available from Japanese grocers, or see method to make your own)

2 tbsp sake

2 tbsp mirin

450g (1lb) peeled potatoes, cut into 3cm (1¼ inch) irregular pieces

150g (5½oz) peeled carrots, cut into 3cm (1¼ inch) irregular pieces

75g (2¾oz) banana shallots or echalion (about 4), or 1 large white onion, peeled and thickly sliced lengthways

250g (9oz) shirataki noodles

2 tbsp granulated sugar

4 tbsp soy sauce, plus 1 tbsp to finish

50g (1¾oz) fine green beans, tailed and halved

NIKUJAGA

Japanese-style Beef and Potato Hotpot with Shirataki Noodles

SHIRATAKI NOODLES | DASHI | SOY SAUCE | MIRIN | SAKE

One of the main comfort, home cooking dishes of Japan, Nikujaga (niku = beef, jagaimo = potatoes) is a hotpot of beef, potatoes and shirataki noodles, the zero calorie noodle made from Japanese konnyaku (see page 141). The noodles soak up all the delicious flavours of the cooking broth, a mix of dashi, soy sauce, mirin and sake. The beauty of Nikujaga is that it actually requires very little beef, but still feeds an entire family.

Nikujaga is a wonderful and warming dish that gets even tastier over time, so make double quantities and have it for your lunchbox the following day!

1. Make the Primary Dashi (see page 20) or use a dashi infusion bag. This will save you time and the dashi will be just as good for this dish.
2. You can find thinly sliced sukiyaki beef (about 2mm/⅛ inch thick) in most Japanese grocers. Alternatively, ask your butcher to prepare it, or make your own. Choose a thick sirloin or fillet steak, wrap in clingfilm (plastic wrap) and freeze for about 30 minutes until rather firm. Using the sharpest knife you have, slice the beef against the grain into very thin slices. Refrigerate until needed.
3. In a medium-sized pan, bring the dashi stock, sake, mirin, potatoes, carrots and shallots to the boil over a high heat. Turn the heat down slightly and cook for 10 minutes until the vegetables are beginning to soften but still retain their bite.
4. While the vegetables are cooking, fill another pan with boiling water and blanch the shirataki noodles for about 15 seconds. Drain the noodles into a colander, refresh under cold running water and roughly cut up the noodles with scissors so they are not too long.
5. Add the sukiyaki beef, shirataki noodles, sugar and 4 tablespoons of soy sauce to the pan with the semi-cooked vegetables. Turn the heat down, and simmer for 4 minutes. Finally add the green beans and continue simmering for another 5 minutes or until the potatoes and carrots are cooked and soft.
6. Just before serving, add the remaining tablespoon of soy sauce, mix gently and check for seasoning. Serve immediately or let the flavours infuse in your fridge for up to 3 days.







CHILLED GREEN TEA SOBA NOODLES

with a Red Onion and Coriander (Cilantro) Fritter in a Cold Dashi Broth

SERVES 4

**DASHI | GREEN TEA SOBA NOODLES | SOY SAUCE |
MIRIN | SAKE | TEMPURA FLOUR | SESAME SEEDS |
SHICHIMI PEPPER**

Do not be intimidated by the length of this recipe, it is in fact quite straightforward. Most elements must be made in advance including the chilled dashi-soy broth and the fritters, which can be re-fried for a few seconds to warm and crisp them up just before serving.

This recipe uses two important ingredients – homemade Primary Dashi and green tea soba noodles. It is a summertime favourite at my Japanese and Nikkei events.

For the dashi-soy broth

900ml (1½ pints/3¾ cups) Primary Dashi (see page 20)
4 tbsp light soy sauce (usukuchi shoyu)
4 tbsp mirin
2 tbsp sake
1–2 tsp caster (superfine) sugar
pinch of sea salt
2 slices of root ginger, skin on, each 3cm (1¼ inches) long

For the red onion and coriander (cilantro) fritter

½ bunch of coriander (cilantro), including stems, roughly chopped
½ red onion, finely sliced into lengths no longer than 3cm (1¼ inches)
fine sea salt
freshly ground black pepper
sunflower oil, for deep-fat frying
1 x quantity of Tempura Batter (version 1 or 2, see page 189)
tempura flour or cornflour (cornstarch), for first coating

To serve

½ red chilli
200g (7oz) green tea soba noodles (available from Japanese food stores)
1–2 tsp toasted white sesame seeds
sprinkle of shichimi pepper, or crushed chilli (dried red pepper) flakes
8 edible flowers (optional)

- 1.** Start by making the dashi-soy broth. This can be made in advance and kept in the fridge. First make the Primary Dashi (see page 20). Put the Primary Dashi, soy sauce, mirin, sake, sugar and salt in a pan, bring to the boil, then reduce the heat and simmer for 10 minutes or until the flavours are well combined. Turn off the heat and let it cool down completely, then add the ginger slices. Transfer to an airtight container and refrigerate until needed. The broth will keep in the fridge for up to 3 days.
- 2.** Put 4 serving bowls in the fridge to chill. Make the fritters in advance – they should be made ahead then re-fried just before serving. Place the coriander (cilantro) and red onions in a bowl and season with salt and black pepper.
- 3.** In a deep pan, add enough sunflower oil to deep-fry the fritters (you only need the oil to be about 5cm/2 inches deep) and heat the oil to 160°C (320°F).
- 4.** Make the Tempura Batter (see page 189).
- 5.** Add 2–3 tablespoons of tempura flour or cornflour (cornstarch) to the coriander (cilantro) and red onions and mix so the vegetables are well coated.
- 6.** Add the tempura batter to the fritter mixture and mix well so all the vegetables are coated. Place a rack over a tray to drain the cooked fritters on.
- 7.** Using 2 tablespoons, make a small, compact bundle of the fritter mix, then very carefully slide it off the tablespoon into the hot oil. Make sure you are very gentle as you want the vegetables and batter to stick together as they fry. Fry the fritter lightly for 30–60 seconds, turning it over once halfway through cooking; you do not want it to colour. Transfer to the rack to drain. Continue making the fritters and frying until all the vegetable batter is used up.
- 8.** Deseed and finely dice the red chilli, place in an airtight container and refrigerate. Cook the green tea soba noodles in a pan with plenty of boiling water, following the packet instructions. Drain and refresh completely under cold running water. Refrigerate until needed but do not cook the noodles too far ahead or they will become soggy.
- 9.** When you are ready to serve, reheat the sunflower oil to 160°C (320°F), and deep-fry the fritters again for about a minute or until they are lightly coloured and crispy. Transfer to a plate lined with kitchen paper (paper towel).
- 10.** To serve, using a fork and tablespoon, make a tight wrapped bundle of green tea soba noodles in the middle of each chilled serving bowl, top with a crispy coriander (cilantro) and red onion fritter, the diced red chilli and a sprinkle of white sesame seeds and shichimi pepper or chilli (dried red pepper) flakes. Carefully pour the chilled dashi-soy broth around the noodles and add an edible flower, if using, to the broth. Serve immediately.

UDON NOODLES, TRUFFLE BUTTER AND PARMESAN

SERVES 2

1 quantity of Udon Noodles (see page 142) or 500g (1lb 2oz) frozen udon noodles, or 250g (9oz) dried udon noodles
1 tbsp light extra virgin olive oil
1 tbsp unsalted butter
2 tbsp good-quality truffle butter
25g (1oz) aged Parmesan cheese, finely grated
slices of preserved black truffle or generous shaving of fresh black truffle (optional)
Maldon sea salt flakes, to taste

UDON NOODLES

This is one of my favourite recipes in the book. I love truffles in cheese, eggs and mashed potatoes, but truffles and udon noodles take the fungus to the next level!

Udon Noodles (see page 142) are so easy to make at home, but if you prefer not to, just buy good-quality frozen udon. They should have a bouncy, springy texture, a cross between Italian gnocchi and spaghetti, which works brilliantly with truffles. Truffle must never be cooked, and it should be combined with only a couple of other ingredients so as not to overpower its flavour. I have made this recipe dozens of times at home since creating it for this book, it is so addictive!

1. Make and cook the Udon Noodles (see page 142), refreshing them under cold water and completely draining them. If you would rather buy the noodles, I recommend buying frozen udon noodles, or failing that, dried ones. Follow the instructions on the packet to cook the noodles.
2. Fry the cooked noodles in the olive oil and unsalted butter until heated through. Remove from the heat, add the truffle butter and mix well so that it melts completely and coats the noodles.
3. Transfer to a couple of plates, top the noodles with the Parmesan, black truffle if using, and a sprinkle of sea salt flakes. Serve immediately.

For an alternative version using truffle oil rather than butter:

Fry the cooked udon noodles in 2 tablespoons unsalted butter, remove from the heat then add 2 tablespoons top-quality truffle oil, mix well and top with grated Parmesan cheese, Maldon sea salt and truffle shavings, if using.



TOFU, MASCARPONE AND BURRATA CHEESE

with Salmon Caviar and Clementine Teriyaki Sauce

SERVES 4

½ quantity of Clementine Teriyaki Sauce (see page 248)
300g (10½oz) chilled silken tofu block
125–150g (4–5½oz) burrata cheese, whole
25g (1oz) salmon caviar (known as Ikura in Japanese)

For the mascarpone cream

10g (¼oz) shallots, very finely chopped
50g (1¾oz) mascarpone cheese
100ml (3½fl oz/scant ½ cup) double (heavy) cream, whipped
15ml (1 tbsp) cold whole milk
2 tsp very finely chopped basil
fine sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

To garnish

a few micro herbs and edible flowers
½ tsp white toasted sesame seeds

SILKEN TOFU | TERIYAKI SAUCE (SOY SAUCE, MIRIN, SAKE) | IKURA SALMON CAVIAR | WHITE SESAME SEEDS

For all still-to-be-converted tofu sceptics, this recipe is for you. A simple yet elegant side dish of extra-soft silken tofu, creamy mascarpone and burrata cheese, topped with salmon caviar and Clementine Teriyaki Sauce. I promise you, it tastes as delicious as it looks!

1. Make the Clementine Teriyaki Sauce (see page 248). Let it cool down to room temperature and refrigerate until needed (it can be made days in advance).
2. Make the mascarpone cream. Blanch the shallots in boiling water for 20 seconds, drain and squeeze out the water. In a bowl, add the shallots, mascarpone cheese, whipped cream, milk, basil and a little salt and freshly ground black pepper and lightly whip. Place in a lidded container and refrigerate.
3. Place the silken tofu in the centre of a serving platter and spoon 2–3 tablespoons of Clementine Teriyaki Sauce over it; top with the mascarpone cream then the burrata cheese. Spoon a little more Clementine Teriyaki Sauce over the cheese and then add the salmon caviar. Finish with a few micro herb leaves and edible flowers, and a sprinkle of white toasted sesame seeds. Serve.



麻婆豆腐

SERVES 4

1 quantity steamed white rice (see page 138)

For the sauce

75g (2 $\frac{3}{4}$ oz/ $\frac{1}{4}$ cup) brown miso
75g (2 $\frac{3}{4}$ oz) tobanjan chilli bean paste
2 tbsp soy sauce
4 tbsp mirin (or 2 tbsp sugar dissolved in 2 tbsp water)
125ml (4fl oz/ $\frac{1}{2}$ cup) water
1 tsp cornflour (cornstarch)
2 tbsp sesame oil

For the mabo dofu

500g (1lb 2oz) firm tofu (or silken if you prefer)
2 tbsp sunflower oil
2 garlic cloves, peeled and finely chopped
2cm ($\frac{3}{4}$ inch) piece of root ginger, peeled and finely chopped
1 long red chilli, thinly sliced
250g (9oz) minced (ground) pork
100g (3 $\frac{1}{2}$ oz) bamboo shoots, cubed (optional)

To garnish

1 tbsp toasted sesame oil
2 spring onions (scallions), finely sliced
1 tsp toasted white sesame seeds
generous pinch of shichimi pepper or crushed chilli (dried red pepper) flakes

JAPANESE-STYLE MABO DOFU

Tofu with Spicy Miso Pork Sauce

MISO | TOFU | TOBANJAN CHILLI BEAN PASTE | BAMBOO SHOOTS | SOY SAUCE | MIRIN | SESAME OIL AND SEEDS | GINGER | SHICHIMI PEPPER

Japanese-style Mabo Dofu is gentler, sweeter and less spicy than the Sichuanese original. It is highly flavoursome due to the addition of miso and tobanjan, and with the pork mince, it is akin to a rich ragout but with none of the hassle. Tobanjan is fermented chilli bean paste made from broad and soybeans hailing from Sichuan Province in China, but it is used extensively in Japan. Pre-cooking the tofu before stir-frying is a technique that helps firm up the tofu and prevent it from breaking up as it is fried.

Japanese-style Mabo Dofu is a 20-minute recipe, ideal for a mid-week meal, and is great comfort food too. The perfect accompaniment for it is steamed short-grain white rice (see page 138), but you could serve it with baked potatoes, fried aubergine (eggplants) or even bread.

1. Cook the white rice (see page 138) and keep it warm.
2. Make the sauce. Place all the sauce ingredients in a bowl, mix well and set aside.
3. Cut the tofu into 2-cm ($\frac{3}{4}$ -inch) cubes, place in a pan of boiling water over a medium heat and when the cubes come up to the surface, remove them from the pan and drain over a colander for a few minutes. This will prevent the tofu from breaking up as it stir-fries.
4. Prepare all the ingredients before you start to stir-fry. Heat the sunflower oil in a wok until smoking hot, add the garlic, ginger and chilli and stir-fry for a few seconds until fragrant but not burnt. Add the pork and cook, stirring constantly, until it is no longer pink.
5. Add the bamboo shoots, if using, and stir-fry for another minute, then add the sauce and cook on a gentle heat for about 3 minutes, stirring from time to time. Finally add the tofu, gently mixing, and let it warm through for a couple of minutes.
6. Transfer to a serving bowl, drizzle with the sesame oil and scatter over the spring onions (scallions), white sesame seeds and shichimi pepper or crushed chilli (dried red pepper) flakes. Serve immediately with the steamed white rice.



SERVES 4

½ quantity of Shiitake Mushroom Dashi (see page 22), or for a quicker alternative use 4 dried shiitake mushrooms soaked in 350ml (12fl oz/1½ cups) hot water with 1 tbsp granulated sugar plus ½ tsp instant dashi powder
 500g (1lb 2oz) fresh okara
 150g (5½oz) French beans, tailed and cut in half
 1 small onion, sliced lengthways
 1 carrot, peeled and julienned
 4 tbsp soy sauce
 1 tbsp granulated sugar
 1 tbsp mirin
 2 tbsp toasted sesame oil
 4 spring onions (scallions), white and green parts separated and finely sliced
 fine sea salt, to taste

To garnish

generous sprinkle of sansho pepper
 generous sprinkle of white sesame seeds

UNOHANA – OKARA STIR-FRY

with French Beans, Carrots and Shiitake Mushrooms

OKARA | SHIITAKE DASHI | SESAME OIL AND SEEDS | SOY SAUCE | MIRIN | SANSHO PEPPER

Okara is the soybean lees leftover from making soy milk (see page 144) and in Japan it is used in a number of dishes including unohana. An okara stir-fry served as a side dish, unohana is rich in protein and fibre, and is full of flavour with the texture of fine couscous.

1. Make the Shiitake Mushroom Dashi (see page 22). Alternatively, add the dried shiitake mushrooms, hot water and instant dashi powder to a bowl, mix well and leave the mushrooms to soak for 30–60 minutes until softened. Drain the mushroom water into a clean container, avoiding the grit that settled at the bottom of the bowl. Measure out 300ml (10fl oz/1½ cups) of the mushroom water and sliced mushrooms. Squeeze out the water from the shiitake mushrooms, discard the stems and finely slice the caps.
2. Add the fresh okara to a non-stick frying pan (skillet) and dry-fry it over a medium heat for 10–20 minutes. Stir the okara from time to time using a wooden spatula, scraping the bottom of the pan and turning it over to stop it from burning. You want to dry out the okara and make it toasty and grit-like in texture. Meanwhile prepare the vegetables. Add the soy sauce, sugar and mirin to the Shiitake Mushroom Dashi or the mushroom soaking liquid, mix well and set aside.
3. Heat 1 tablespoon of toasted sesame oil in a wok or deep frying pan (skillet), add the beans, onions and carrots and stir-fry for 30–60 seconds. Add about a third of the soy sauce and mushroom dashi mix, and cook the vegetables for another minute.
4. Add the okara to the wok, stirring it well until it is completely mixed with the vegetables. As you continue frying, add more of the soy sauce and mushroom dashi to bind the mixture. Keep frying and stirring on a low heat until most of the liquid dries out. You may not need to use all the soy sauce and mushroom dashi depending on how dry you prefer your final dish. I like mine on the dry side.
5. Turn off the heat, add the sliced white part of the spring onions (scallions) and the remaining toasted sesame oil to the wok and mix these into the dish. Finally add some sea salt and check for seasoning. Add more salt if desired.
6. To serve, plate the unohana on individual dishes, top with the sliced green spring onions (scallions), add a generous sprinkle of sansho pepper and white sesame seeds, and serve.



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JAPANESE FRUIT AND VEGETABLES





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|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| A: YUZU JUICE | L: PURPLE SHISO (PERILLA) |
| B: KABOCHA PUMPKIN | M: OYSTER MUSHROOM |
| C: DAIKON (WHITE RADISH) | N: HACHIYA PERSIMMON |
| D: YUZU MARMALADE | O: FUYU PERSIMMON |
| E: YUZU | P: GINGER |
| F: BITTER MELON | Q: SHIITAKE MUSHROOM |
| G: NAGAIMO (YAMAIMO) | R: SHISHITO PEPPERS |
| H: MAITAKE MUSHROOM | S: YUZU PEEL |
| I: SHIMEJI MUSHROOM | T: LOTUS ROOT |
| J: KING OYSTER MUSHROOM | U: BAMBOO |
| K: GREEN SHISO (PERILLA) | V: BURDOCK (GOBO) |
| | W: ENOKI MUSHROOM |





HIGUCHI FARM, KYOTO CITY

Masataka Higuchi comes from a long-established family of Kyoto farmers (400 years to be exact) – he represents the very best in Kyo Yasai, the native vegetables of Kyoto. And this is in part because Higuchi is the only farmer in the city known to be planting vegetable seeds passed down from past generations.

Higuchi explained: 'At every year's harvest, I choose the plants producing the very best vegetables for their seeds for the next year's crop. Just as my father taught me and our ancestors did before him.' This means that Higuchi's vegetables are 100 per cent Kyo Yasai, and are the most sought-after produce among the top Michelin-starred restaurants in Japan and beyond.

Higuchi was hugely enthusiastic, a warm and welcoming farmer with a very big laugh and bags of personality – in the few hours I spent with him, I got to try many of his fine vegetables and even pick my own delectable Kyoto carrots!



JAPANESE FRUIT AND VEGETABLES

This chapter touches on the huge subject that is Japanese fruit and vegetables, so it is by no means a comprehensive guide to the expansive range of fresh produce currently available in Japan.

JAPANESE FRUITS

In this section we will look at two of the most popular Japanese fruit – yuzu and persimmon.

Yuzu

Japan has many types of citrus fruit including mikan and sudachi, but the yuzu is by far the most prized and popular in and out of the country. Yuzu citrus is about the size of a tangerine, it is bright yellow when ripe, and has a short season between November and early January. The fragrance and flavour of yuzu does not resemble any other known citrus in the West. To me, the closest it comes to is a mixture of tangerine, grapefruit, lime and lemon.

In Japan, the fruit is almost entirely used for its marvellous aromatic rind, which is sliced into small pieces and added to soups, simmered dishes, pickles and desserts to impart its unique fragrance. Yuzu rind is also used to make one of my favourite Japanese ingredients – yuzu kosho (see Chapter 3).

Yuzu juice is very sour and strongly flavoured and is used in a variety of different dishes from salad dressings to desserts. We use yuzu juice in my recipe for Yuzu-Pon Sauce, a variation of ponzu sauce (see page 248). The juice is also called for in my Yuzu Cream, Rhubarb (or Plums) and Pistachio Crumble (see page 216).

Yuzu peel and juice can also be turned into fantastic yuzu marmalade. You can make your own or you can purchase it at Japanese grocers or online. I use yuzu marmalade in my recipes for Yuzu

Brioche Toasties with Limoncello, Yuzu Marmalade and Almond Cream (see page 218) and the Yuzu Marmalade and Whisky Highball cocktail (see page 239). If you have not tried yuzu marmalade yet, I urge you to – it is one of those life-changing ingredients!

Persimmon (Kaki)

Persimmon is one of the most popular fruits in Japan. There are two main types – hachiya (astringent) is shaped like an acorn and used for cooking; and fuyu (non-astringent) is round in shape, and eaten just like an apple. We use hachiya persimmons in the super-quick recipe for Persimmon in Amaretto Liqueur with Amaretti Biscuits and Pistachios (see page 214).

JAPANESE VEGETABLES

Vegetables play a huge role in Japan's national cuisine. As a Buddhist country, the killing of any living animal was frowned upon, and although meat consumption has become widespread today, this is a recent trend.

There are many ways to enjoy Japanese vegetables – one of my favourite is in kakiage, or Japanese fritters. This is the home-style tempura enjoyed throughout Japan. It is a doddle to prepare and only requires a couple of specialist ingredients. In my recipe for Kakiage (see page 192), I make use of a number of Japanese vegetables.

Vegetable tempura is a beautiful thing. One of the simplest dishes in Japanese cooking, but also one of the hardest to get right, if you follow my instructions for How to Make Tempura at Home (see page 188), you will be on your way to tempura heaven. And this means perfectly deep-fried vegetable morsels that are crispy, light and oil-free.

Kyoto Vegetables (Kyo Yasai)

Great care is given to Japanese agriculture, and one area of the country that is particularly renowned for

its produce is Kyoto. Kyoto vegetables are known as Kyo Yasai – they are highly prized throughout Japan and have unique shapes, vivid colours and are rich in nutrition. I was lucky enough to meet Mr Higuchi (see page 184), who inspired me to create the recipe My Kyoto Garden (see page 202).

Edamame Beans

Edamame beans are such a versatile vegetable. In My Kyoto Garden (see page 202) I use them to create a cream laced with white miso and tarragon, and topped with a number of different vegetables, including kabocha pumpkin, cooked in a light vegetarian dashi. I get to use it again as a major ingredient in the recipe for Chilled Edamame and White Miso Cream with Tarragon (see page 200). Think of this as a Japanese-style gazpacho!

Kabocha Pumpkin

I really enjoy cooking with this pumpkin for its versatility and rich flavour. With an edible jade-coloured skin and bright orange flesh, kabocha not only works beautifully as a vegetable in My Kyoto Garden (see page 202) it also lends itself brilliantly to desserts. See my recipe for Japanese Kabocha Pumpkin Squares in Sugar, Cloves and Cinnamon Syrup on page 212. In Japan, very little is ever wasted, and with that in mind I use the edible skin of the pumpkin to make Kabocha Pumpkin Skin, Onion and Chorizo Fritters (see page 196).

Nagaimo

A wonderful way to enjoy Japanese vegetables is in the quintessential Osaka street-food – Okonomiyaki (see page 208). As well as using fresh cabbage and spring onions (scallions), the secret for a perfect Okonomiyaki batter lies in one important ingredient – nagaimo.

Nagaimo is a type of mountain yam (yamaimo) with a very viscous consistency when peeled and

finely grated. The flavour of nagaimo is mild and pleasant, but the texture can be a challenge to many non-Japanese. It is normally grated and mixed with a little dashi, soy sauce and spring onions (scallions) to make a Japanese dish called tororo. Grated nagaimo can also be added to other dishes such as soba noodles to impart their unusual texture and flavour, but also works perfectly as a binder in the batter for Okonomiyaki, making it fluffy and light.

Burdock (Gobo)

Japanese burdock is a long, slender root vegetable with an earthy flavour and crunchy texture. The skin has the best of its flavour, so avoid robust peeling, scrubbing it as thoroughly as you can instead. Once cut, burdock will oxidize, so submerge it in cold water to prevent discolouration. In addition to working well in Kakiage (see page 192), burdock is great in stir-fries and soups such as Tonjiru (see page 84).

Daikon (white radish)

Daikon (white radish) is ubiquitous in Japan, where it is a much-loved vegetable. It is used in a variety of dishes ranging from daikon (white radish) steak and salads to soups or simply grated in dipping sauces. In this book I use daikon (white radish) in the recipe for Daikon (White Radish) Fries, Garlic and Soy Sauce (see page 206), Yasai No Agebitashi (see page 204) and grated for Ten Tsuyu Dipping Sauce (see page 250) used for tempura and Kakiage (see page 192).

Bitter Melon (Bitter Gourd)

Known as nigauri in Japanese (and goya in Okinawan dialect where this vegetable is a major ingredient), this knobbly vegetable is shaped as a cucumber but with a lighter shade of green. It is also very common in India and other South Asian countries where it is known as karela. To soften its natural bitterness, brine in plenty of salt or blanch it in boiling water before

cooking. Here I include the classic Okinawan recipe Goya Champuru (see page 194), a delectable stir-fry using bitter melon, pork belly and tofu.

Mushrooms (Kinoko)

Such is the importance and wonderful variety of Japanese mushrooms, I use them in various recipes in this book. So why not try a trio of Japanese mushrooms – namely shiitake, shimeji and oyster – in the recipe for Japanese Three Mushroom Rice Cooked in a Light Mushroom Dashi (see page 210), or pick your own assortment and make the Risotto of Japanese Mushrooms, Miso-Mascarpone and Parmesan (see page 150).

Matsutake, known as pine-mushroom, is a delicacy in Japan where it is highly prized (and priced). It cannot be cultivated commercially and has a very short season. It is as sought-after while in season as truffles are in Europe.

Maitake, on the other hand, is more widely available outside Japan. In Europe and the United States, maitake is commonly called 'hen of the woods', since its frond-like growths resemble the feathers of a fluffed chicken. Maitake contains L-glutamate, one of the complex amino acids that provide umami flavour, so I like using it whenever it is in season. I include maitake in my Mochi Pizza with Gruyère, Wild Mushrooms and Truffle (see page 156).

Nameko mushroom is another favourite, although I have never seen it fresh outside Japan. It has a very short shelf life so it is normally sold brined in cans or jars even in Japan.

If you would like to experiment with the meaty eryngii or king oyster mushroom, I also include a recipe for it here – King Oyster Mushrooms, Soy and Sansho Pepper (see page 126). This is a lovely recipe which is all about eryngii and the Japanese spice sansho pepper (see Chapter 3).

Bamboo Shoots (Takenoko)

Bamboo shoots are used throughout Asia and are also a common ingredient in Oriental dishes in the

West where they are preserved and sold in cans. In Japan, fresh bamboo shoots in spring are a real delicacy and when just immediately dug from the ground can be finely sliced and eaten as sashimi (takenoko no sashimi). I use bamboo shoots in my recipe for Japanese-Style Mabo Dofu (see page 176).

Chilli Peppers

Togarashi refers to chilli peppers in Japan, and this encompasses the small, red and fiercely hot chilli pepper as well as the green, sweet and mild shishi-togarashi (or shishito). The former is consumed fresh when in season but is mostly seen in powder, flake or thread forms (itokiri togarashi, see page 161). I discuss this type of Japanese chilli pepper, either as ichimi or shichimi togarashi, in more detail in Chapter 3.

Shishito peppers, on the other hand, are only eaten while fresh, they are a popular side dish or snack in many Japanese izakaya restaurants. Shishito peppers look and taste very similar to Padron peppers and outside of Japan, this is what I use if I cannot get hold of the Japanese variety. I call for shishito or Padron peppers in the traditional Japanese recipe for Sakana no Nitsuke – halibut simmered in nitsuke broth (see page 28) as well as Seafood and Chorizo Ramen with Spicy Miso Broth, Burnt Sweetcorn and Padron Peppers (see page 158).

Shiso (Perilla)

Shiso, a member of the mint family, is a wondrous herb. It has a unique flavour and aroma reminiscent of a cross between mint and basil. It comes in two different colours – green and purple. In Japan, green shiso is used mainly as a garnish for sashimi, but can also be added to sushi and even deep-fried for tempura. Purple shiso is used primarily for colouring and flavouring umeboshi pickles (soured plums), shochu (distilled spirit) and Japanese sweets. Shiso's flowering seed pods are also used as garnish.

I love using shiso in green herb salads and mixed into rice or buttered spaghetti. I also use it to make herb-infused oil, as in my Shiso Oil (see page 251).

HOW TO MAKE TEMPURA AT HOME

Introduced to Japan by the Portuguese in the 16th century, tempura was tweaked and adapted to the national palate to become the classic batter-fried food of Japan. Deceptively easy, tempura is in fact one of the hardest dishes to get right. The Japanese will usually go to a specialist restaurant whenever they want to eat tempura. At home, kakiage or tempura fritters are more commonplace. In making perfect tempura, three important aspects must be observed – fresh ingredients, oil at a constant temperature and lumpy batter. In high-end tempura restaurants in Japan, tempura is only seasoned with salt. A dipping sauce can also be used.

Freshest Ingredients Only, Please!

For tempura, a variety of seasonal fresh vegetables, fish and seafood can be used. Some of my favourite ingredients are peppers, broccoli, mushrooms, sweet potato slices, aubergines (eggplants), onion rings, okra, pumpkin, de-veined prawns (shrimp), small fish fillets and squid.

Chicken, pork and beef are considered too heavy for tempura and are not used. Meat can be used for another type of Japanese deep-fried food called 'kushiage', these are deep-fried skewers of vegetable, meat or fish coated in panko breadcrumbs.

Ingredients should be washed, cut, dried and refrigerated before frying. Ideally, ingredients should be very cold before hitting the hot oil.

Keep That Oil Hot!

Tempura oil should be pure sunflower or vegetable oil blended with a little sesame seed oil for added flavour. Do not use animal fat or olive oil as these are too flavoursome and would mask the natural flavour of the ingredients being fried.

In tempura restaurants in Japan, different foods are fried at different temperatures. This is impractical at home, so generally speaking, fish should be fried quickly at a high temperature (170–180°C/338–350°F) to retain moisture and tenderness, while vegetables should be fried longer

at a lower temperature (150–160°C/300–320°F). The importance of oil temperature cannot be overstressed – if the oil is not hot enough, the food will absorb a lot of oil and become heavy, soggy and 'fatty'; if the oil is too hot, while the outside frizzles black, the inside will still be raw or too crunchy.

There are many home-style ways of testing the temperature of the oil, such as dropping a tiny bit of batter into the oil (it should descend slightly beneath the surface of the oil, then float up to the surface). However, the best and fool-proof way to gauge oil temperature is to invest in a cooking thermometer or a deep-fat fryer. It is a small investment to make but it will take away all the guesswork from the process.

Once the oil has been heated to the required temperature, keep it at that level. To help the oil to retain its temperature while deep-frying:

- deep-fry food in small quantities so that the pan is never overcrowded
- do not cover more than a third of the surface of the pan with ingredients
- the depth of oil in the pan should be twice or more than the thickness of the items being deep-fried
- use a deep-fat fryer with a reliable thermometer or a heavy, thick-bottomed and flat pan (a wok is not adequate as the round shape results in different oil temperatures at the sides and in the centre).

Lumpy Batter – Do Not Panic, It Is Meant To Be Lumpy!

When making tempura batter, you want to create a lacy, golden effect with the deep-fried coating, and not a thick, pancake-like casing. To achieve this the batter should be very lumpy and have the consistency of runny double (heavy) cream. In fact, do the opposite of what you would do to make good pancakes – make the tempura batter just before deep-frying, do not mix it well and do not let it stand. The batter consistency can also be adjusted according to personal taste – if a thicker batter is preferred, use less iced water and more flour and vice-versa if you like a lighter coating.



HOW TO DEEP-FRY THE PERFECT TEMPURA AT HOME

1. Prepare the food items to be deep-fried, ensuring they are dry and chilled.
2. Make the Ten Tsuyu Dipping Sauce (see page 250).
3. Heat fresh oil to 150–170°C (300–338°F).
4. Prepare the tempura batter (see right).
5. Coat individual pieces in the batter, shake off any excess, then slide the battered item into the deep-fat fryer.

6. Each ingredient will require different frying times. Prawns (shrimp) will only require 1–2 minutes, while vegetables such as broccoli or oyster mushrooms will need about 3 minutes until they are lightly golden.

7. Turn the ingredients over in the oil after 1 minute for even cooking.

8. Replenish the batter with more flour and ice cubes as required.

9. Briefly drain before transferring to a serving plate.

10. Serve immediately with a generous sprinkle of sea salt or with the hot dipping sauce with grated daikon (white radish).

TEMPURA BATTER - VERSION 1

100g (3½oz/¾ cup) tempura flour or batter mix (widely used in Japan, the most popular brand being Showa, available in Japanese stores, major supermarkets or online)
160ml (5½fl oz/⅔ cup) iced water

1. In a bowl, gently mix the tempura flour or batter mix with the iced water using chopsticks until a lumpy batter is achieved with a consistency of double (heavy) cream. Do not overmix, it is meant to be lumpy.

TEMPURA BATTER - VERSION 2

1 egg yolk
100ml (3½fl oz/scant ½ cup) iced water
160g (5¾oz/1¼ cups) plain (all-purpose) flour, sifted (more required for 1st coating)

1. Put the egg yolk and water in a bowl. Break the yolk and mix. Add the flour, mix gently just until the ingredients are loosely combined. The batter should be very lumpy. If you overmix, the batter will be sticky and the coating will turn out oily and heavy.





かき揚げ

SERVES 6

KAKIAGE

a Trio of Japanese-style Vegetable and Seafood Fritters

TEMPURA FLOUR | TEN TSUYU DIPPING SAUCE | WASABI SALT | MATCHA SALT | KAMABOKO FISHCAKE | BURDOCK

Kakiage is a delicious home-style tempura fritter made from a mixture of vegetables, fish and seafood. I hope you will try it!

For the sweetcorn and fishcake (Japanese kamaboko) or crab stick fritter

200g (7oz/1¼ cups) sweetcorn kernels, preferably fresh, or use frozen and lastly canned
100g (3½oz) Japanese fishcake, known as kamaboko, or good-quality crab/seafood sticks, cut into matchsticks
2 spring onions (scallions), thinly sliced
½ tsp instant dashi powder
½ tsp fine sea salt
2 tbsp cornflour (cornstarch) or tempura batter mix

For the watercress, prawn (shrimp) and squid fritter

100g (3½oz) squid, cut into thin strips
100g (3½oz/3 cups) watercress, roughly chopped
2 spring onions (scallions), thinly sliced
6 fine green beans, cut into 3cm (1¼ inch) pieces
6 medium-sized prawns (shrimp), deveined and cut in half lengthways
½ tsp fine sea salt
2 tbsp cornflour (cornstarch) or tempura batter mix

For the burdock and carrot fritter

200g (7oz) burdock root, peeled and julienned (can use celeriac or parsnips instead)
1 small carrot, peeled and julienned
1 small onion, peeled and sliced lengthways
½ tsp fine sea salt
2 tbsp cornflour (cornstarch) or tempura batter mix

For the lumpy batter (quantity for 1 type of fritter)

1 quantity of Tempura Batter (see page 189) or use 100g (3½oz) tempura batter mix lightly mixed with 160ml (5½fl oz/⅔ cup) chilled water

For frying

sunflower oil, for deep-frying

To serve

1 quantity of Ten Tsuyu Dipping Sauce (see page 250) with grated daikon (white radish)
Japanese wasabi, matcha or sakura salt or Maldon sea salt flakes

- 1.** Make the Ten Tsuyu Dipping Sauce first (see page 250).
- 2.** Prepare all the vegetables and seafood for the fritters, dry them and place in individual containers.
- 3.** If you are making all 3 types of fritter, add all the ingredients (except the cornflour/cornstarch or tempura batter mix) for each type of fritter to 3 separate bowls. Lastly, add the cornflour (cornstarch) or tempura batter mix and mix well to coat all the ingredients.
- 4.** In a medium-sized pan, heat about 4cm (1½ inches) deep of sunflower oil to 160°C (320°F) for deep-frying. While the oil is heating up, prepare the tempura batter (see page 189) or, if using tempura batter mix, very lightly mix it with the chilled water until a lumpy batter is achieved. Do not overmix, the batter is meant to be lumpy.
- 5.** Add most of the lumpy tempura batter to the bowl with the sweetcorn and fishcake or crab stick mixture and mix it thoroughly until the vegetables and seafood are all partially wet and a rough batter is formed. The consistency should not be completely wet, it should be lumpy, with visible pockets of dry flour but paste-like enough to stick the vegetables and seafood together. Add more tempura batter, water or flour if necessary.
- 6.** Take a heaped soup spoon of the mixture and, using a second soup spoon, gently press the mixture down to mould it into a nicely rounded shape. This process will shape the fritter and stop it from coming apart as it hits the oil. Very gently slide the mixture off the spoon into the hot oil. Do not overcrowd the pan, but fry 4–6 fritters at any one time until all the batter is used up. Fry the fritters for 2–3 minutes, turning them over halfway through, until crisp and golden.
- 7.** Make another batch of tempura batter; the batter should be made just as you are ready to start frying. For the watercress, prawn (shrimp) and squid fritter, prepare the mixture as instructed above. Then make the round shape of the mixture using soup spoons and carefully slide into the hot oil. Fry for 1 minute, then turn it over and fry for another minute or so. If you would like to make larger and beautifully rounded fritters, you can use a noodle strainer. To form each one, add about 4 tablespoons or roughly one-sixth of the mixture to the strainer basket, press gently, then lower the basket into the oil. Repeat until all the mixture is used up.
- 8.** Make a third batch of tempura batter and repeat this process for the burdock and carrot fritters.
- 9.** If you would like to serve the fritters very hot, you can quickly re-fry them for 30 seconds or so just to heat them through; they will turn crispier. Serve the fritters with the dipping sauce with grated daikon (white radish) if using or with a generous sprinkle of wasabi, matcha or sakura salt or Maldon sea salt flakes.

ゴーヤチャンプル

GOYA CHAMPURU

Okinawan Bitter Melon Stir-fry with Pork Belly,
Tofu and Egg

SERVES 4

300g (10½oz) block firm
tofu (or make your own,
see page 147)
300–400g (10½–14oz)
bitter melon (known
in Japanese as nigauri
or goya), sliced in half
lengthways, seeds and
white pith scraped out
and discarded
1 tsp fine sea salt, plus more
for seasoning
200g (7oz) pork belly, thinly
sliced then cut into 2cm
(¾ inch) pieces
2 tbsp sake
2 large eggs
2 tbsp sunflower oil
1 tsp instant dashi powder
2 tbsp soy sauce, plus 1 tbsp
to finish off
½ tbsp toasted sesame oil
toasted white sesame seeds
sea salt and freshly ground
black pepper, to taste

Optional garnishes

generous drizzle of Japanese
mayonnaise or homemade
Japanese Kewpie-style
Mayonnaise (see page
250)
La Yu chilli oil
handful of katsuoboshi
flakes
sprinkle of aonori seaweed

BITTER MELON | TOFU | DASHI POWDER | SOY SAUCE | SAKE | KEWPIE MAYONNAISE | KATSUOBUSHI | AONORI

Goya Champuru is a classic home-cooking dish from the sub-tropical island of Okinawa in Japan. There are many versions, but all will include bitter melon (known as goya in Okinawan dialect). The goya bitterness is surprisingly addictive.

1. Drain the tofu. Place it inside a colander or plastic sieve (strainer), put a plate over the tofu and top it with a heavy weight. This will help to draw out the water. Let it press for 15–20 minutes inside your sink or in a deep tray.
2. Meanwhile, slice the bitter melon into 1-cm (½-inch) thick diagonal slices. Place the slices in a colander, sprinkle with 1 teaspoon of fine sea salt and mix thoroughly to coat. Let it stand for 10 minutes to soften some of the bitterness. In a bowl, lightly season the pork slices with salt and black pepper, add the sake and mix well, then let it rest for 15 minutes. In a separate bowl, beat the eggs with a little sea salt and black pepper.
3. Rinse the bitter melon slices under fresh running water to remove the salt. Drain and pat dry with a clean tea towel (dish cloth). Drain the tofu and pat dry with kitchen paper (paper towel) or a clean tea towel (dish cloth). With your hands, break the tofu up into irregular chunks 3–4cm (1¼–1½ inches) thick.
4. Heat half the sunflower oil in a wok. Add the tofu pieces and fry on a high heat until golden, turning them gently so they are evenly coloured. Transfer them with a slotted spoon to a plate or tray. Add the rest of the sunflower oil to the wok and stir-fry the bitter melon slices for about 2 minutes until they begin to soften. Transfer them to a clean plate.
5. Add the pork and sake to the pan and stir-fry until it turns pale and starts to brown a little. Return the bitter melon and tofu pieces, add the instant dashi powder and 2 tablespoons of soy sauce and gently fold these into the mixture. Continue stir-frying over a high heat for 1 more minute. Push everything to one side of the wok. Pour in the beaten eggs and scramble it, then gently mix it in with the other ingredients. Check for seasoning and add another tablespoon of soy sauce and more black pepper if desired. Finish off with a drizzle of sesame oil and white sesame seeds. Turn off the heat.
6. The Goya Champuru can be served as it is, but for some added Japanese flavours you can transfer it to a serving platter and use some of these optional ingredients – a generous drizzle of Japanese mayonnaise and/or La Yu chilli oil, topping it with katsuobushi flakes and aonori seaweed. I like using them all!



KABOCHA PUMPKIN SKIN, ONION AND CHORIZO FRITTERS

Japanese Kakiage with Yuzu-Pon Sauce

SERVES 6

300g (10½oz) kabocha
pumpkin, skin and flesh
150g (5½oz) white
onion, peeled and sliced
lengthways
50g (1¾oz) firm, spicy
chorizo sausage, cut into
small cubes
½ tsp fine sea salt
sunflower oil, for deep-frying
1 quantity of tempura batter
(see page 189) (or use
100g/3½oz tempura
batter mix lightly mixed
with 160ml/5½fl oz/
⅔ cup chilled water)
3 tbsp cornflour (cornstarch)
or tempura batter mix

To serve

1 quantity of Yuzu-pon
Sauce (see page 248),
or a generous sprinkle of
Japanese wasabi, matcha
or sakura salt

KABOCHA PUMPKIN | TEMPURA FLOUR | YUZU PON (YUZU, LIGHT SOY SAUCE, DASHI, MIRIN, RICE VINEGAR)

Kabocha pumpkin is one of my favourite Japanese vegetables – it is a versatile ingredient that goes well in both savoury and sweet dishes. The skin is edible, tastes delicious and is full of nutrients, so do not throw it away! In Japan it is socially unacceptable to be wasteful – the exclamation *mottainai* in Japanese translates as 'Don't be wasteful!' and refers not only to the wastefulness of food and other resources but also thoughts and action. I always prepare this kakiage when making the Japanese Kabocha Pumpkin Squares dessert on page 212, so nothing is wasted.

1. Make the Yuzu-Pon Sauce (see page 248), if using. Wash and dry the kabocha pumpkin. Using a vegetable peeler, peel the pumpkin thoroughly and continue peeling the flesh until you obtain the required weight. Roughly chop the pumpkin skin and flesh with a knife or food processor. In a bowl, mix the pumpkin with the onion, chorizo and sea salt.
2. In a medium-sized pan, heat about 4cm (1½ inch) deep of sunflower oil for deep-frying to 160°C (320°F). While the oil is heating up, prepare the Tempura Batter (see page 189), or if using tempura batter mix, very lightly mix it with the chilled water until a lumpy batter is achieved. Do not overmix, the batter is meant to be lumpy.
3. Add the cornflour (cornstarch) or tempura flour to the pumpkin, onion and chorizo mixture and mix well so that everything is coated in flour. Now add most of the lumpy tempura batter to the bowl and mix it thoroughly until the vegetables and chorizo are all partially wet and a rough batter is formed. The consistency should not be completely wet, it should be lumpy, with visible pockets of dry flour but paste-like enough to stick the vegetables and chorizo together. Add more tempura batter, water or flour if necessary.
4. Take a heaped soup spoon of the mix and, using a second soup spoon, gently press the mixture down to mould it into a nicely rounded shape. This process will shape the fritter and stop it from coming apart as it hits the oil. Very gently slide the mixture off the spoon into the hot oil. Fry 4–6 fritters at any one time until all the batter is used up – do not overcrowd the pan. Fry for 2–3 minutes, turning the fritters over halfway through until they are crisp and golden.
5. Serve the fritters with the Yuzu-Pon Sauce, or with a generous sprinkle of Japanese wasabi, matcha or sakura salt.



平安堂
法
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HERITAGE TOMATOES AND HALLOUMI IN YUZU-PON DRESSING

with Pine Nuts and Micro Herbs

SERVES 6

½ quantity of Yuzu-Pon Sauce (see page 248)
25g (1oz/3 tbsp) pine nuts
500g (1lb 2oz) heritage tomatoes of various colours, including 1 yellow, 1 orange, 1 light green, 1 dark green and about 8 small red vine tomatoes
150g (5½oz) halloumi cheese, cut into 1cm (½ inch) cubes, or mozzarella pearls
1 banana shallot, finely sliced
½ red chilli, deseeded and very finely diced
1 tbsp each of micro coriander (micro cilantro), micro basil and red amaranth
a few edible flowers
Maldon sea salt flakes and freshly ground black pepper

YUZU-PON SAUCE (YUZU JUICE, LIGHT SOY SAUCE, MIRIN, DASHI, RICE VINEGAR)

Tomatoes and yuzu have a great affinity and in this salad, paired with savoury halloumi cheese, you can try the pairing for yourself. This salad screams summer to me – it is vibrant, zingy and full of colour. Yuzu ponzu (or yuzu-pon for short) is a beautiful thing and I use it often as a salad dressing or as a dipping sauce such as for Kabocha Pumpkin Skin, Onion and Chorizo Fritters (see page 196). I love serving this colourful salad with the Oven-Roasted Beef Picanha (see page 82) at my Japanese and Nikkei supper club events.

1. Make the Yuzu-Pon Sauce (see page 248).
2. Dry-fry the pine nuts until lightly coloured then set aside.
3. When ready to serve, cut the tomatoes into 5-mm (¼-inch) thick slices. Place the slices flat on a large, white serving plate, arranging them so that the different colours are evenly spread out.
4. Drizzle the Yuzu-Pon Sauce over the tomatoes.
5. Scatter the halloumi, shallots, red chilli, pine nuts, micro coriander (micro cilantro), micro basil, red amaranth and edible flowers over the tomato slices and finish off with a generous dusting of sea salt flakes and black pepper. Serve.



CHILLED EDAMAME AND WHITE MISO CREAM WITH TARRAGON

A Japanese-style Gazpacho

SERVES 4

1.5 litres (2 pints 10fl oz/6½ cups) Primary Konbu Dashi (see page 22)

500g (1lb 2oz/4 cups) shelled edamame (green soybeans), fresh or frozen

1 small leek, white part only, roughly chopped

6 tbsp white miso

4–5 tbsp rice vinegar or white wine vinegar

sea salt, to taste

To garnish

few drops of Tarragon Oil or Basil Oil (see page 251), optional

2 tbsp tarragon or micro basil

2 tbsp wasabi hot green peas, roughly crushed (optional)

EDAMAME | KONBU DASHI | WHITE MISO | RICE VINEGAR

This is a chilled, lightly tart, savoury and refreshing soup. Completely dairy free, the white miso adds umami flavour and creaminess without the lactose. I love using Primary Konbu Dashi or a good-quality vegetable stock for a vegetarian soup but you can also use Primary Dashi (see page 20), which contains fish. The tarragon oil and hot wasabi peas are optional but both add layers of flavour and texture that go really well in this soup.

1. Prepare the Primary Konbu Dashi (see page 22) and the Tarragon or Basil Oil (see page 251), if using.

2. Place the edamame, leek and dashi in a pan, cover and bring to the boil over a medium heat. Simmer for about 6 minutes or until the edamame and leek are soft and tender. Transfer to a food processor, add the white miso and blend until completely smooth. Let it cool down.

3. Transfer the soup to a sealable container and refrigerate for a few hours along with the 4 serving bowls.

4. Add the rice or white wine vinegar and mix well into the cold soup. Check for seasoning and adjust this to your taste by adding some sea salt or a little more white miso for creaminess.

5. Just before serving, divide the soup between the chilled bowls, garnish with the chopped tarragon or micro basil, the crushed wasabi hot green peas and a few drops of the Tarragon or Basil Oil, if using. Serve immediately.



SERVES 4

For the vegetable medley

2 litres (3½ pints/8 cups)

Primary Konbu Dashi (see page 22) or vegetable stock

25g (1oz) edamame beans, shelled (frozen or fresh)

35g (1¼oz) green broccoli florets, no larger than 2.5cm (1 inch) tall

75g (2¾oz) Romanesco, cut into bite-sized florets

6 fine green beans

½ small carrot, cut into 3-mm (⅛-inch) round slices

75g (2¾oz) kabocha pumpkin, skin on, cut into 5-cm (2-inch) half-moon shaped wedges

75g (2¾oz) yellow courgette (zucchini), cut into 1-cm (½-inch) half-moon slices

6 mangetout

4 red cherry tomatoes, halved

For the edamame cream

150g (5½oz) edamame beans, shelled (frozen or fresh)

50g (1¾oz/¼ cup) white miso

60ml (2¼fl oz/¼ cup) Primary Konbu Dashi (see page 22) or vegetable stock

zest of ½ lemon, plus 2 tbsp lemon juice

½ tsp sugar

pinch of fine sea salt

2 tbsp tarragon, finely chopped

To finish

½ quantity Yuzu-Pon Sauce (see page 248)

micro herbs and edible flowers

1 tbsp toasted white sesame seeds

1 tbsp Maldon sea salt flakes

MY KYOTO GARDEN

Vegetable Medley, Edamame Cream and Yuzu-Pon Sauce

KONBU DASHI | YUZU PON SAUCE | EDAMAME BEANS | KABOCHA PUMPKIN | WHITE MISO | SESAME SEEDS

This dish was inspired by my visit to Higuchi Vegetable Farm in Kyoto (see page 184). Choose some gorgeous vegetables with different colours, shapes and textures and prepare them so they look delicate.

1. Make the Primary Konbu Dashi (see page 22) or use ready-made stock. Divide the dashi or stock into 2 equal parts. Place half in a pan to cook the vegetables. Place the other half in the fridge in a sealable container. Prepare the Yuzu-Pon Sauce (see page 248).

2. To make the edamame cream, cook the edamame in salted boiling water until soft (2–3 minutes if fresh, about 5 minutes if frozen). Drain the beans, place in a food processor with all the other edamame cream ingredients except the tarragon, and blitz until you have a smooth paste with the consistency of firm hummus. Add the tarragon and mix well, check for seasoning and adjust if necessary. It should be flavoursome and zingy. Refrigerate until needed.

3. Prepare the vegetables, making sure they are roughly the same size (no larger than 2–3cm (¾–1¼ inches) and look delicate and pretty. I have given suggestions, but you can use vegetables of your choice. Place a few ice cubes in the chilled dashi and set aside.

4. Heat the dashi or vegetable stock in the pan until boiling. Turn the heat down and cook one type of vegetable at a time, before transferring to the chilled stock. First cook the edamame for 3–4 minutes until soft but still retaining a bite. Scoop them out and place in the chilled dashi. Cook the broccoli, Romanesco florets and green beans separately for 2–3 minutes, fish them out and immerse them in the cold dashi.

5. Make sure the dashi is still chilled, if not, add a few more ice cubes. Cook the carrots and then the kabocha pumpkin for 3–5 minutes (test one to make sure they are soft), then remove from the pan and place in the chilled dashi. Finally, cook the courgette (zucchini) and then the mangetout for no more than 1 minute, then transfer to the chilled dashi with the remaining vegetables.

6. Fish out the vegetables from the dashi, drain well and pat dry with a clean tea towel (dish cloth). Cut the green beans and mangetout diagonally in half. You can keep the dashi stock to make soup or cook other vegetables.

7. Create a bed of the edamame cream on a rectangular plate. Arrange 1 or 2 pieces of each vegetable over the cream, drizzle some of the Yuzu-Pon Sauce over the vegetables, top with the micro herbs and edible flowers, if using, and serve with the sesame seeds and sea salt flakes.



野菜の揚げ浸し

YASAI NO AGEBITASHI

Deep-Fried and Marinated Vegetables in Dashi,
Soy and Mirin

SERVES 8

1 large aubergine (eggplant)
16 okra, washed
sunflower oil, for deep-frying
5cm (2 inch) piece of daikon
(white radish)
2 tsp peeled and finely
grated root ginger
4 tbsp finely sliced spring
onions (scallions)
8 tbsp dried bonito flakes
(katsuobushi) (optional)
toasted white sesame seeds
(optional)

For the marinade and sauce

400ml (13½fl oz/1⅔ cups)
Primary Dashi (see page
20) or infuse a good-
quality dashi infusion
bag in 400ml (13½fl oz/
1⅔ cups) of boiling water,
or lastly use 1 tsp instant
dashi powder dissolved in
400ml (13½fl oz/1⅔ cups)
hot water
80ml (3fl oz/⅓ cup) soy
sauce
80ml (3fl oz/⅓ cup) mirin
80ml (3fl oz/⅓ cup) sake
1 tbsp granulated sugar

DAIKON (WHITE RADISH) | AUBERGINE (EGGPLANT) | OKRA GINGER | SOY SAUCE | DASHI | MIRIN | SAKE | KATSUOBUSHI

Yasai No Agebitashi is a good example of how Japanese cooking can be so simple and yet elegant and full of flavour. A great dish to prepare ahead of time, deep-fried vegetables are dunked into a delectable marinade of dashi, soy sauce and mirin and served at room temperature. Yasai No Agebitashi is a wonderful way to enjoy seasonal vegetables with unmistakable Japanese flavours.

1. First prepare the Primary Dashi (see page 20). Make the marinade by combining all the marinade ingredients in a pan, bring to the boil, ensure the sugar is completely dissolved, then turn off the heat.
2. Cut the aubergine (eggplant) in half lengthways and then into 8 long wedges about 2.5cm (1 inch) wide. Score the skin of the aubergine (eggplant) wedges without cutting it completely through from one side to the other. You want to make deep incisions in the aubergine's (eggplant's) skin and flesh as this will help it cook more easily and absorb more of the marinade. Cut each wedge in half to make 16 aubergine (eggplant) pieces. Using a small, sharp knife, make a small incision in the middle of each okra so they do not burst while deep-frying.
3. In a medium-sized pan, heat enough oil to 160°C (320°F) to deep-fry the vegetables. Deep-fry the aubergine (eggplant) pieces in batches for about 3 minutes skin side down – do not overcrowd the pan as the oil temperature will rapidly go down. Remove the aubergine (eggplant) pieces from the oil and let them drain over a wire rack placed inside a roasting tin (pan) for about 1 minute. Transfer the aubergine (eggplant) pieces to the marinade while still hot, this time skin side up. Repeat this until all the pieces have been fried.
4. In the same oil, fry the okra for 2 minutes or until they start to blister but not brown. Drain on the same rack and transfer to the marinade, ensuring they are submerged. Let the vegetables marinate for at least 1 hour and up to overnight.
5. When you are ready to serve, peel and finely grate the daikon (white radish).
6. To serve, place 2 pieces each of aubergine (eggplant) and okra in the middle of a bowl, pour a couple of tablespoons of the marinade over the vegetables, topping them with the grated daikon (white radish), ginger and spring onions (scallions). Add some dried bonito flakes and a little sprinkle of toasted white sesame seeds if using, and serve.



DAIKON (WHITE RADISH) FRIES, GARLIC AND SOY SAUCE

With Miso, Tobanjan Chilli and Garlic Sauce

SERVES 2

½ quantity of Miso, Tobanjan Chilli and Garlic Sauce (see page 249)
300g (10½oz) daikon (white radish)
2 garlic cloves, peeled and mashed to a paste
2 tbsp soy sauce
sunflower oil, for deep-frying
6 tbsp katakuriko potato starch or cornflour (cornstarch)
generous sprinkle of shichimi or espelette pepper

DAIKON (WHITE RADISH) | SOY SAUCE | KATAKURIKO POTATO STARCH | MISO | TOBANJAN CHILLI BEAN PASTE | SESAME OIL

If you think daikon (white radish) is one of those weird ingredients solely used in Japanese and other Asian cuisines, think again! Daikon works a treat as fries, they soak up the soy sauce and garlic marinade flavours superbly and are really crunchy and moreish once fried. I like serving them with the Miso, Tobanjan Chilli and Garlic Sauce (see page 249) but you can have them on their own or with mayo or other sauces of your choice. If you are a daikon (white radish) sceptic, I urge you to try this recipe!

1. Make the Miso, Tobanjan Chilli and Garlic Sauce (see page 249). Set aside until needed.
2. Peel the daikon (white radish) and cut into 1-cm (½-inch) thick sheets, then cut these into batons about 8cm (3 inches) long and 1cm (½ inch) thick.
3. Place the daikon (white radish) batons in a flat tray, mix the garlic and soy sauce well in a small bowl and pour this mixture onto the daikon (white radish). Mix the batons around to ensure they are completely coated, and let them marinate for 15 minutes.
4. Meanwhile, fill a frying pan (skillet) with sunflower oil to just over 2cm (¾ inch) deep, and heat the oil to 160°C (320°F). If you do not have a thermometer, touch the tip of a wooden cooking chopstick inside the bottom of the pan, if fine bubbles appear on the chopstick, the oil is ready to be used.
5. Drain the daikon (white radish), discarding the soy sauce. Add the potato starch or cornflour (cornstarch) to a large plate, add the daikon (white radish), mix it thoroughly to create an outer layer of batter and shake off any excess.
6. Immediately add the battered daikon (white radish) batons into the hot oil, let them cook for 1 minute undisturbed. Using a pair of chopsticks or forks, carefully release any batons that may have stuck together, and continue frying for a further 3–4 minutes or until crisp and golden.
7. Transfer the crispy fries to a wire rack placed over a tray or large platter, let them drain for a few seconds. Sprinkle generously with shichimi or espelette pepper and serve immediately with the Miso, Tobanjan Chilli and Garlic Sauce as a dip.



お好み焼き

MAKES 8 LARGE
PANCAKES

For the batter

280g (10oz/2¼ cups) plain
(all-purpose) flour
225ml (7½fl oz/scant 1 cup)
water
1 tsp fine sea salt
1 tsp baking powder
2 tsp caster (superfine) sugar
2 tsp instant dashi powder
100g (3½oz) nagaimo
(Japanese yam), peeled
and finely grated
4 eggs, lightly beaten
350g (12oz) cabbage,
chopped
100g (3½oz) kimchi,
chopped
100g (3½oz) carrots,
shredded
50g (2oz) spring onions
(scallions), finely sliced
25g (1oz) red pickled ginger
(Japanese beni shoga),
finely chopped
4 tbsp toasted sesame oil

For the toppings

100g (3½oz) pork belly,
thinly sliced
100g (3½oz) baby squid, cut
into small slices
Japanese mayonnaise
okononiyaki sauce
red pickled ginger (Japanese
beni shoga)
aonori (green powdered nori
seaweed)
katsuobushi flakes

OKONOMIYAKI OSAKA-STYLE

Japanese Cabbage Pancake with Pork Belly and Squid

**NAGAIMO | OKONOMIYAKI SAUCE | KEWPIE MAYONNAISE |
INSTANT DASHI POWDER | RED PICKLED GINGER | SESAME
OIL | AONORI | KATSUOBUSHI**

The quintessential Osaka street food, okonomiyaki toppings may vary but squid and pork belly are popular choices. Using grated nagaimo (Japanese yam) will make for a fluffy and light batter, or you can buy okonomiyaki flour which contains it in dry form. Okonomiyaki pancakes are easy to make and a delicious all-in-one meal.

1. Start by making the batter. In a bowl large enough to accommodate all the batter ingredients, mix the flour, water, salt, baking powder, sugar, dashi powder and nagaimo yam. Cover and refrigerate for at least an hour.
2. Just before frying, add the eggs, cabbage, kimchi, carrots, spring onions (scallions) and the red pickled ginger to the batter. Mix well until all the vegetables are coated.
3. Heat a non-stick frying pan (skillet) with a lid for a few minutes on a medium-low heat. Add 1 tbsp of sesame oil, making sure to coat the pan thoroughly. Spoon the batter mixture into the pan to form a pancake about 15cm (6 inches) in diameter and about 2.5cm (1 inch) thick. Do not push down on it as you want a fluffy pancake.
4. Lay a few pork belly and squid slices on top of the pancake, trying not to overlap them. Cover with the lid and cook the pancake on a medium-low heat for about 3 minutes, checking after a minute or so to ensure the heat is not too high and the bottom of the pancake is not browning too fast.
5. Turn the heat down to low. Using a spatula, carefully flip the pancake, so the side with the pork and squid slices is now facing down. Gently press the pancake down with the spatula, cover with the lid and cook for about 5 more minutes.
6. Flip the pancake again so that the side with the pork and squid slices is now facing up, and cook for 2 more minutes. The pancake should be lightly browned when ready, the pork and squid cooked and the cabbage tender inside. Repeat until all the pancake batter and other ingredients are used up.
7. Transfer the pancake to a plate, cut it into 4 slices, press these back together, and add the toppings in the following order – a generous drizzle of Japanese mayonnaise and okonomiyaki sauce, followed by the red pickled ginger, a sprinkle of the aonori seaweed and a handful of katsuobushi flakes. Serve hot.



JAPANESE THREE MUSHROOM RICE

Shiitake, Shimeji and Oyster Mushrooms Cooked in a Light Mushroom Dashi

SERVES 4–6

30g (1¼oz) dried shiitake mushrooms
1.5 litres (2 pints 10fl oz/6⅓ cups) warm water
1½ tbsp granulated sugar
300g (10½oz/1⅔ cups) short-grain white rice
300g (10½oz) mix of fresh oyster, shimeji and shiitake mushrooms
370ml (12½fl oz/1½ cups) mushroom dashi (the water used to soak the dried shiitake mushrooms)
3 tbsp light soy sauce (usukuchi shoyu)
50g (1¾oz/¼ cup) unsalted butter
2 tsp toasted sesame oil (optional)
4–6 mangetout, blanched in boiling water for 15 seconds, drained, refreshed in cold water and sliced thinly on the diagonal, to garnish

SHIITAKE, SHIMEJI AND OYSTER MUSHROOMS | SHORT-GRAIN RICE | LIGHT SOY SAUCE | SESAME OIL

I love making this rice to go with my Pan-Fried T-Bone Steak on page 48. It has a wonderful earthy flavour from the different mushrooms.

1. Soak the dried shiitake mushrooms in the measured warm water, add half a tablespoon of sugar and mix well. Let the mushrooms rehydrate for 1 hour until very soft and plump. The soaking liquid will become your mushroom dashi.
2. Wash the rice in a bowl with plenty of fresh water using a circular motion with your hand. Drain the water and repeat 3–4 times until the water runs clear. Transfer the rice to a sieve (strainer) and let it drain for 15 minutes. Wipe the fresh mushrooms with a damp cloth, discard the stems and cut into chunks.
3. When the dried mushrooms are soft, measure out 370ml (12½fl oz/1½ cups) of the mushroom dashi (the water used to rehydrate the mushrooms), avoiding any grit in the bottom of the bowl, and set aside. Discard the stems and finely slice the mushrooms. Mix the rehydrated and fresh mushrooms together.
4. In a bowl, mix together the reserved mushroom dashi, the soy sauce and remaining 1 tablespoon of sugar until it is completely dissolved. Add the drained rice and leave to soak for 30 minutes. When the soaking time is up, cook the rice either in a rice cooker or in a pan over a stove as follows.
5. Rice cooker method: add the rice and mushroom dashi to the rice cooker bowl, top with the mushrooms, close the lid and turn it on. It should take 15–20 minutes to cook. Once the rice cooker's alarm beeps, let the rice rest in the unopened rice cooker for at least 15 minutes.
6. Pan and hob (stove) method: choose a pan with a tightly fitting lid (preferably of glass) and with a small ventilation hole for some of the steam to escape. When the soaking time is up, add the rice and mushroom dashi to the pan, top with the mushrooms, place the lid on and bring to the boil (a glass lid will allow you to see when the water comes to the boil). As soon as it boils, turn the heat down to its lowest setting and simmer gently for 15 minutes. Do not remove the lid at any stage during cooking or resting. Take off the heat and let the rice rest for a further 15 minutes.
7. Once the rice has rested, open the rice cooker (or pan), add the unsalted butter and sesame oil (if using) and mix thoroughly. Place the mushroom rice in individual rice bowls, top with the mangetout and serve.



JAPANESE KABOCHA PUMPKIN SQUARES

in Sugar, Cloves and Cinnamon Syrup

SERVES 12

1kg (2¼lb) kabocha pumpkin
30g (1¼oz/3 tbsp) quicklime powder (calcium oxide, available online or from hardware shops)
800ml (28fl oz/3⅓ cups) water
400g (14oz/1¾ cups) granulated white sugar
5 cloves
2 cardamom pods, lightly crushed
2 cinnamon sticks

KOBOCHA PUMPKIN

This is one of the most unusual recipes in this book as I use an alkaline solution made from quicklime to marinate the pumpkin squares. This creates a firm, crunchy outer layer in the pumpkin pieces while their inside will turn soft and creamy.

This is a very traditional Brazilian recipe I enjoyed many a time as I grew up in the country. Kabocha is a wondrous Japanese pumpkin that is sweet and creamy, working well with both savoury dishes and desserts. The skin has a lot of the goodness from the vegetable and can be eaten, so do not throw it away, but use it in the Kabocha Pumpkin Skin, Onion and Chorizo Fritter recipe (see page 196).

1. Peel the kabocha pumpkin and cut it into 3cm (1¼ inch) cubes. Place the cubes in a large sealable container.
2. Dissolve the quicklime powder in 2 litres (3½ pints/8⅓ cups) of water and pour this alkaline solution over the pumpkin, ensuring that the cubes of pumpkin are completely submerged in the solution. Cover the container and let it rest overnight.
3. Discard the quicklime solution; place the pumpkin cubes in a large colander and thoroughly wash them under fresh running water to eliminate any traces of the quicklime mixture.
4. In a pan large enough to hold the sugar syrup and pumpkin cubes, place the measured water and sugar, and mix well over a low heat until the sugar is completely dissolved. Add the cloves, cardamom and cinnamon and let it simmer for a few minutes until nearly boiling. Add the pumpkin cubes and continue simmering for about 30 minutes until the pumpkin is cooked, then remove from the heat. The pumpkin should have a firm exterior but be very soft inside; you may need to try a couple of pieces every so often to check doneness.
5. Let the pumpkin squares cool down completely. Transfer to an airtight container and refrigerate until needed. It will keep for a couple of weeks in the fridge. Serve chilled or at room temperature.



PERSIMMON IN AMARETTO LIQUEUR

with Amaretti Biscuits and Pistachios

SERVES 4

6 hachiya persimmons,
ripened and very soft
50ml (2fl oz/¼ cup)
Amaretto liqueur (or other
liqueur of your choice)
2 tbsp caster (superfine)
sugar
150g (5½oz) soft Amaretti
biscuits
2 tbsp pistachios, lightly
crushed
4 edible flowers, to decorate
(optional)

PERSIMMON (HACHIYA)

Persimmon (kaki) is one of the most popular of fruits in Japan. The astringency of hachiya persimmons come from their high level of tannins; they are bitter and chalky and are only edible when they fully ripen at which point the chalkiness fades and the sweetness of the fruit comes forward. You will know hachiya persimmons are ripened when they become very soft, the flesh translucent and jelly-like, and their skin loses its opacity developing a full brilliant red-orange colour. And this is when they are ready for this recipe – a super-quick and uncomplicated dessert inspired by a recent visit to Italy where I tried a similar dish called *Cachi al Licore*. I love adding soft Amaretto biscuits and pistachio nuts for the flavour and texture they bring.

1. Halve the persimmons, scoop out the flesh into a bowl and discard the seeds.
2. Lightly mash the flesh with the back of a fork, keeping it rather lumpy, and remove any white strings. Stir in the Amaretto liqueur and sugar and mix well. Cover and refrigerate for at least 1 hour or overnight.
3. Just before serving, roughly crumble the Amaretti biscuits and use them to cover the bottom of 4 serving glasses or ramekins. Spoon the persimmon mixture over the biscuits, top with a little more crushed biscuits, the crushed pistachio nuts and an edible flower if you wish, and serve.



SERVES 6

For the yuzu cream

300ml (10fl oz/1¼ cups)
double (heavy) cream
85g (3oz/scant ½ cup)
caster (superfine) sugar
30ml (1fl oz/2 tbsps) yuzu
juice
30ml (1fl oz/2 tbsps) lemon
juice

For the pistachio crumble

75g (2¾oz/½ cup)
pistachios, roughly
chopped
75g (2¾oz/2⅔ cups)
granulated sugar
75g (2¾oz/scant ½ cup)
plain (all-purpose) flour
generous pinch of sea salt
75g (2¾oz/⅓ cup) unsalted
butter, chilled and diced

For the poached rhubarb

400g (14oz) rhubarb stalks
120g (4oz/½ cup)
granulated sugar
½ vanilla pod (bean),
split and seeds scraped
(optional)

**For the poached plums
(alternative topping)**

500g (1lb 2 oz) plums
200g (7oz/1 cup) golden
caster (superfine) sugar
225ml (7½fl oz/scant 1 cup)
water
1 cinnamon stick
½ vanilla pod (bean),
split and seeds scraped
(optional)

YUZU CREAM, RHUBARB (OR PLUMS) AND PISTACHIO CRUMBLE

YUZU JUICE

This is one of my go-to summer desserts as it is super easy to make. With layers of yuzu cream posset, poached rhubarb or plums, and pistachio crumble, this dessert is fuss-free and uses a quintessential Japanese ingredient – yuzu citrus (see page 185).

1. Start by making the yuzu cream. Put the cream and sugar in a pan large enough to allow the liquid to double in volume, and bring to the boil, stirring to dissolve the sugar. This should take a few minutes but keep a close eye, as when it reaches boiling point the mixture will expand very quickly. Reduce the heat so that the mixture does not boil over, and cook for 3 minutes, stirring regularly. Remove from the heat and stir in the yuzu and lemon juices – the mixture will thicken as the citric juices curdle the cream. Mix well.
2. Divide the yuzu cream between 6 serving glasses then tap them on the work surface to eliminate any air bubbles. Refrigerate for a few hours until the yuzu cream is set. The yuzu cream can be made a couple of days in advance.
3. To make the pistachio crumble, preheat the oven to 160°C/320°F/gas mark 3. Place all the dry ingredients in a bowl and mix them together well. With your fingertips, blend the butter into the mixture until it resembles breadcrumbs. Line a tray with baking (parchment) paper or foil, place the crumble mixture onto it and spread out evenly with your fingertips. Bake for 5–7 minutes or until just golden. Remove from the oven and let it cool down. Transfer to an airtight container and use within a week.
4. To cook the rhubarb, cut the end off each stalk and cut the stalk in half lengthways then cut into 2cm (¾ inch) pieces. Place in a small pan, cover with the sugar and just enough water to cover the rhubarb, add the vanilla pod (bean) and seeds and simmer gently for 10 minutes until just soft but still retaining its shape and some texture. Leave to cool and refrigerate until needed.
5. For an alternative topping, yuzu also pairs beautifully with plums. Prepare the plums – wash them, remove the stones and cut each plum into 8 bite-sized pieces. Place the sugar, measured water, cinnamon stick and vanilla pod (bean) if using, and seeds in a pan. Heat gently until the sugar dissolves. Add the plums to the syrup, bring to the boil and simmer for 5–10 minutes until the fruit is soft. Leave to cool and refrigerate until needed.
6. To serve, spoon some of the poached rhubarb or stewed plums into each glass over the firm yuzu cream. Top with the pistachio crumble and serve.



YUZU BRIOCHE TOASTIES

with Limoncello, Yuzu Marmalade and Almond Cream

SERVES 8

4 shop-bought brioche buns
100g (3½oz) yuzu citron tea
marmalade
75g (2¾oz/⅓ cup) flaked
almonds
icing (confectioner's) sugar,
for dusting

For the limoncello syrup

100ml (3½fl oz/scant ½ cup)
water
75g (2¾oz/⅓ cup)
granulated sugar
1 large lemon, juice and zest
50ml (2fl oz/¼ cup)
limoncello liqueur

For the almond cream

125g (4oz/1½ cups) flaked
almonds
75g (2¾oz/⅓ cup)
granulated sugar
pinch of sea salt
2 eggs
120g (4oz/½ cup) unsalted
butter, softened
2 tbsp brandy

YUZU MARMALADE

This recipe was inspired by the wonderful *Tartine Bread* cookbook from the eponymous bakery in California, where these toasties are called Bostock. In my version, I use limoncello and Japanese yuzu marmalade, which is made from the fragrant Japanese citrus yuzu. If you cannot find yuzu marmalade (or yuzu cha as it is known in Japan) at your local Japanese food store, try a Korean food store where yuzu/yuja marmalade is called 'honey citron tea' or 'yuja cha'.

The almond cream and limoncello syrup can all be made in advance and the brioche buns purchased from a shop. If you prefer an alcohol-free version, just omit the limoncello or brandy. A great weekend breakfast or brunch treat!

1. Make the almond cream first by adding the flaked almonds, sugar and salt to a food processor and blending until well ground. Add the eggs and butter and mix again to make a paste. Transfer to a sealable container, add the brandy and mix well. Cover and refrigerate for at least 1 hour.
2. To make the limoncello syrup, add all the ingredients except the limoncello to a small pan and heat until all the sugar is dissolved. Turn off the heat and let it cool down completely then add the limoncello. Mix well and reserve.
3. Slice the brioche buns in half and toast them until they are evenly golden but not browned. Let them cool down.
4. Preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F/gas mark 6. Line a baking tray (sheet) with baking (parchment) paper.
5. When you are ready to bake, quickly brush each brioche toast liberally with the limoncello syrup until they are moist, then transfer them to the lined baking tray (sheet). Spread a very thin layer of the yuzu marmalade on top followed by a thicker layer of the almond cream. Top with the flaked almonds and bake for 10–12 minutes until golden brown. Dust with the icing (confectioner's) sugar before serving.





A photograph of three bottles of Japanese beverages on a wooden surface. The central bottle is green with a white label featuring a stylized figure and the characters '八八り酒' (Yatsu-Yatsu-ri). To its left is another green bottle with a black label and a white figure. To its right is a blue bottle with a white label featuring the character '頭' (Atama). A glass of white beverage is in the foreground on the left.

JAPANESE TEAS AND OTHER BEVERAGES

大極上中級
本醸造
八八り酒

頭



JAPANESE TEAS

The great majority of tea consumed in Japan is, and historically has long been, green tea. The freshly-picked tea leaves are steamed to prevent oxidization and this unique Japanese process gives green tea its vibrant colour and flavour.

There is, however, a plethora of teas that fall within this green category based on a number of different criteria – for example, the time when the tea leaves are harvested, how much sun they have seen, how the tea is processed, and what parts of the plant are used in the final product, to name just a few.

While green tea is grown and consumed all across Asia, matcha is a product unique to Japan. Matcha is made from young tea leaves grown in the shade, making them intensely green in colour. The tea is harvested and the stems removed by hand before the leaves are dried and milled into very fine powder. There are several different grades of matcha, based on the quality of the leaves and what part of the country they are grown in. No matter what grade you find, matcha will never be cheap.

Historically, matcha was used as part of Japanese tea ceremonies. The astringent powder was whisked into hot water and served alongside fine Japanese confectionery to balance out its strong taste. Probably due to this ancient association with sweets, today matcha is the number one flavouring for Japanese desserts – it is the vanilla of Japan. There is a matcha version of pretty much everything you can think of from ice creams and custards to cakes, biscuits (cookies) and macarons, you name it. There are even matcha-flavoured KitKat chocolate bars!

I use matcha in a number of ways in this book, so if you are still not convinced by this uniquely

Japanese ingredient, why not try it in the recipe for Matcha and Clotted Cream Rice Pudding (see page 234) or perhaps as a drink in the Matcha Gin Sour cocktail (see page 238) or the Iced Matcha Espresso Latte (see page 241)?

Matcha may be the most popular of Japanese teas, but it is only one of many tea varieties that play an important role in the Japanese drinking culture and cuisine. Paradoxically, matcha is the one kind of tea you are least likely to be sipping on a regular basis due to its high price and potency. Even in Japan, drinking matcha tea is a bit of a treat.

With that in mind, I have used two other types of green tea for recipes in this book. One of my favourite is genmaicha – this is a combination of dried green tea and toasted brown rice (genmai), the latter of which imparts a wonderful nuttiness. Genmaicha is sometimes called 'popcorn tea' because some of the grains of brown rice will pop during the roasting process, resembling popcorn. You can experiment with genmaicha tea in the recipes for Genmaicha Ice Cream (see page 231) or Panettone Bread and Butter Pudding with Genmaicha Custard (see page 232).

Hojicha is another variety of green tea that works brilliantly as a flavouring. Hojicha is a reddish-brown tea made by roasting bancha (a lower grade sencha green tea that contains leaves as well as some stems) in a clay pot over charcoal. This makes hojicha toasty, nutty and mellow, as well as low in caffeine, so it is ideal served during or after an evening meal. I use hojicha in the recipe for Hojicha Ice Cream with Sweet White Miso Caramel Sauce (see page 230).

Gyokuro is the Rolls-Royce of green teas with a price tag to match. It is made from first-flush green tea leaves grown partially in shade. Sencha is the most commonly consumed tea in Japan, in fact it accounts for 80 per cent of all green tea produced in the country. Sencha is grown in full sunlight and has a delicate and mild flavour with a light floral aroma. Bancha is a lower grade sencha that is more robust in flavour and with a higher astringency. Kukicha (twig tea) is a mix of tea leaves with stems and twigs. It has a mildly nutty and creamy sweet flavour. Mugicha is another popular variety, though not technically a tea as it is made from roasted barley.

A: SUNTORY WHISKY	F: SAKE
B: SAKE (SPARKLING)	G: SAKE
C: PLUM WINE (UMESHU)	H: HOJICHA
D: SUNTORY WHISKY	I: GENMAICHA
E: SHOCHU	J: MATCHA



MORIHAN TEA COMPANY, KYOTO

The beautiful town of Uji is the birthplace of Japanese green tea as well as being home to Morihan. Founded in 1836, Morihan is still a family run business headed by its sixth-generation owner and CEO Yasuhiro Morishita. The plantation has perfect conditions for growing tea, with well-irrigated soil and a network of bamboo awnings to protect the leaves from the sun.

Once harvested, the tea shoots are steamed, then twisted and kneaded, a unique Japanese process that prevents oxidization and retains the intense jade-green colour of the leaves. For the highest-grade matcha tea, the stalks are separated by hand and the young leaves ground in traditional stone-grinders. However, what struck me most about my visit to Morihan was their space-age use of technology and unparalleled levels of hygiene. Morishita explained: 'The company must exceed even the stringent Japanese standards, so for our range of products we have to be absolutely certain of the quality of every item that leaves the factory.' And their diligence certainly pays off – the tea tasting experience with Tea Master Masaru Kikuoka was one of the highlights of my entire visit to the country.



OTHER JAPANESE BEVERAGES

Japanese Whisky

The two main brands of Japanese whisky are Suntory and Nikka. The great pioneer of whisky making in Japan, Shinjiro Torii founded Suntory in 1923, opening Japan's first whisky distillery in Yamazaki, Kyoto. Torii hired Masataka Taketsuru who had studied the art of distilling in Scotland, bringing this knowledge to Japan in the early 1920s. In 1934, Taketsuru left Suntory to form his own company Nikka.

Whisky production in Japan began (and still continues to a certain extent) as a conscious effort to recreate the style of Scotch whisky. The two pioneers went to great lengths in an attempt to recreate that same process and whisky style in their homeland. Today, Japanese whiskies lie between Lowland and Speyside in style. Delicate and perfumed with honeyed sweetness, they are smooth with light sherry and floral notes, but can sometimes be peated for a smoky Islay style.

In Japan, blended whisky can be inexpensive and so the bulk of it is consumed in cocktails, notably as whisky highballs. Fine single malt whiskies are primarily drunk straight, mixed with a little water or on the rocks like Scotch whisky.

Before 2000, the market for Japanese whiskies was almost entirely domestic, though this changed as both Suntory and Nikka started garnering a number of international whisky awards. Outside Japan only the top Japanese whisky labels, mainly aged single malts are available, and some of these can be eye-wateringly expensive, though they are one of a kind.

I use Suntory whisky for my Yuzu Marmalade and Whisky Highball (see page 239).

Shochu

Native to Japan, shochu is a distilled drink that can be made from one or more different raw materials, including sweet potatoes, rice, barley or buckwheat.

Each of these raw materials will give very distinct flavour and aroma profiles to the final shochu. Shochu has an alcohol content of around 25 per cent.

Unlike wine, where the grape sugars are turned into alcohol during fermentation, to make shochu (as well as sake), the sugar needed to produce alcohol must first be converted from starch. This process is known as 'saccharification' and is achieved by the addition of koji (see Chapter 2). Different types of koji can be used for this with each bringing out different characters in the final shochu. Once the sugars have been created, they will then need to be converted into alcohol. Both processes, saccharification of starch and alcoholic fermentation, happen concurrently.

Following fermentation, shochu is either single or multi-distilled. Single, pot-distilled shochu will retain more of the character of the base ingredient, and is more 'artisanal'. Multi-distilled shochu is higher in alcohol content than the usual 25 per cent, is cheaper and less flavoursome and is normally used as a base for cocktails – see Shochu Spritz on page 239.

In Japan, shochu has enjoyed a tremendous rise in its popularity and sales over the last 10 years. Originally perceived as an old-fashioned drink, it has gone through a change of image and is now perceived as a healthy and artisanal drink, and is these days drunk by a trendy, mostly young crowd.

Sake

Also native to Japan, sake is a fermented drink, made solely from one type of grain 'rice' and with an alcohol content of around 15 per cent.

The process of making sake is a complex and laborious one, but in summary the main steps are as follows. Before fermentation takes place, sake rice will need to be milled or 'polished' to remove protein and oils from the exterior of the grains, leaving behind starch. Roughly speaking, the more 'polished' the grains are, the more refined the sake will be with some rice grains being polished to 80 per cent (down to 20 per cent of its original size). After polishing, the grains are rested, washed and steamed.

As in the production of shochu, the sugar needed to produce alcohol must first be converted



TSUKINO KATSURA SAKE BREWERY, KYOTO

Founded in 1675, Tsukino Katsura Sake is headed by Tokubee Masuda, the 14th generation in a family of sake brewers. I went to the renowned sake-producing area of Fushimi Ward, south of Kyoto to meet him. The Masuda family are at the forefront of sake innovation – his father, Keiichi Masuda, pioneered aged sake known as koshu in Japan in the 1960s. Unlike wine, sake is not normally matured but is drunk relatively fresh within a few months of production. He was also the first producer of an entirely new style of sake – the cloudy, unfiltered and lightly sparkling sake known as nigori. A gourmand, he decided that sake, just like wine, should be paired with fine food and this was a catalyst for the development of these different styles.

Tokubee Masuda explained: 'Sake had an unglamorous image in Japan, seen mostly as a drink for old men to get drunk and noisy, we wanted to change this and create sake with interesting flavour profiles that could be enjoyed with food.' He had travelled to Germany to learn about winemaking, and joked that 'if we were to compete with wine, we had better get to know our enemies'.

At Tsukino Katsura brewery, housed in a centuries-old building, I sat with Masuda as we tasted his various sakes. I had read that movie directors Akira Kurosawa and Yasujiro Ozu were fond of sitting in that very room and I could not help but be filled with awe at this family's tireless work, the tradition they represent, and most importantly by the wonderful sake in my glass!

from starch (saccharification), which is achieved by the addition of koji to the cooked rice. The fermentable sugars will then need to be converted into alcohol, and this is again done by adding yeast. After fermentation has taken place the sake is pressed to separate the liquid from the solids (lees).

The lees are known as sake kasu: a wonderful ingredient used for cooking and pickling which I call for in the recipes for Tonjiru or Hearty Miso Soup with Pork Belly, Chunky Vegetables and Sake Lees (see page 84) and Making Pickles Using Sake Lees and Miso (see page 74).

For some types of sake, a small amount of distilled alcohol is added before pressing. The dead yeast is then removed, the sake is carbon filtered, pasteurized and diluted to around 15 per cent. It is matured for six months before being bottled and sold.

Traditionally sake is not aged beyond the six month period mentioned, and is made to be consumed soon after purchase or within a year of production, although this is now changing in Japan. I learnt about this new trend on my recent visit to Tsukino Katsura Sake Brewery (see opposite).

Premium sakes (see below) should nearly always be served chilled as cool to chilled temperatures bring out the best in most sakes, with subtle differences at each temperature. Sake was traditionally served warm to hide the rougher characteristics of this type of drink, but today only table sake is served heated.

Categories of Sake

Broadly speaking, there are only two types of sake: futsuu-shu (table sake – 80 per cent of the market) and tokutei meisho-shu (special designation sake – 20 per cent of the market). For table sake, there are no 'polishing' requirements, rice used is normally of a lower grade, and distilled alcohol is added in amounts far exceeding those permitted for the higher category.

Premium sakes fall within two categories – the ones that have not been fortified by the addition of distilled alcohol (known as junmai) and others, which have (honjozo and gingo). There are about 65 varieties of sake rice, some more prized than others.

Unlike with wine, where you should use the best you can get, table sake is best to use for cooking as it has foregone polishing and contains the highest

amounts of complex amino acids. I discuss cooking sake in more detail in Chapter 1. I also use table sake in my Sakerinha cocktail (see page 238).

You may be interested to know that sake does not rank highly on the list of hangover-inducing beverages. Though moderation is always key!

Umeshu

Umeshu is Japanese plum liqueur, made by macerating unripe and green ume fruit (plums) in Japanese shochu or sometimes sake and sugar. Umeshu is refreshing, with a sweet but lightly sour taste, and an alcohol content of 10–15 per cent. Popular brands include Choya and Takara Shuzo.

Umeshu can be drunk neat but works very well in cocktails as in the recipe for Umeshu Fizz (see page 239). This is a simple but refreshing drink of umeshu and prosecco. Alternatively, try umeshu simply on the rocks or as Umeshu Tonic with one part umeshu to two parts tonic water mixed in with some ice.

You can make umeshu at home – wash 1kg (2¼lb) green unripe plums, place them in a sterilized jar with 1kg (2¼lb) of rock sugar and fill with shochu or sake. Store in a dark, cold place for 6–12 months.

Amazake

Amazake or sweet sake (though it is not a type of sake) is a creamy Japanese hot drink with a natural mild sweetness. There are two main types of amazake – the non-alcoholic variety made with Ama Koji (see page 244) and the lightly alcoholic kind made with sake kasu. Traditionally made with equal measures of sweet ama koji and water and sometimes flavourings such as ginger, amazake is believed to be a healthy drink that boosts the immune system and fights off colds. In Japan it is sold ready-made and is consumed warm in the colder months.

The lightly alcoholic type made with sake kasu is the one the Japanese will prepare mostly at home. It is like a Japanese eggnog, so warming and creamy, it is a real treat in winter and works as a pick-me-up sort of drink. My family recipes for both type of Amazake are on page 241.





HOJICHA ICE CREAM

with Sweet White Miso Caramel Sauce

SERVES 8

For the hojicha ice cream

50g (1¾oz) hojicha loose tea
400ml (13½fl oz/1⅔ cups)
whole milk
200ml (7fl oz/generous
¾ cup) double (heavy)
cream
4 egg yolks
100g (3½oz/½ cup) caster
(superfine) sugar

For the sweet white miso caramel sauce

150g (5½oz/¾ cup)
granulated sugar
120ml (4fl oz/½ cup) water
60g (2oz/¼ cup)
unsalted butter, at room
temperature
120ml (4fl oz/½ cup) double
(heavy) cream
100g (3½oz/scant ½
cup) sweet white miso
(preferably Saikyo)
½ tsp fine sea salt

HOJICHA TEA | SAIKYO MISO

Hojicha is a variety of green tea made by roasting bancha in a clay pot over charcoal. The sweet white miso caramel is the Japanese answer to salted caramel and works very well as a topping for the hojicha ice cream.

1. Start by making the sweet white miso caramel sauce. Place the sugar and measured water in a pan over a medium heat and stir constantly until the sugar has completely dissolved. When the syrup starts to bubble up, stop stirring and allow it to boil undisturbed until thickened and lightly brown in colour. Remove the pan from the heat and mix in the butter. Next slowly add the cream – it will bubble up and splatter, so watch out. Using a long spatula, stir the cream into the mixture until smooth. Finally, add the sweet white miso and sea salt, and continue stirring until both are completely dissolved, you may want to use an electric whisk or hand blender to help you with this. The sauce is served warm, but can be kept in the fridge for up to 2 weeks and reheated just before using.
2. To make the ice cream, add the tea, milk and cream to a medium-sized pan, heat until nearly boiling, then simmer gently for 30 minutes. Remove from the heat, allow the mixture to cool down completely, then pass through a sieve (strainer), discarding the tea.
3. In a bowl, whisk together the egg yolks and sugar until the sugar has completely dissolved and the mixture has whitened.
4. Make a hojicha custard by heating the hojicha-infused milk and cream mixture until it starts to steam. Add the whisked egg yolk and sugar mix to the pan a little at a time, stirring constantly with a rubber spatula so that it does not catch on the bottom of the pan. On a low heat, continue stirring for about 5 minutes until the custard thickens to coating consistency (when a line remains clear as it is drawn on the back of the spatula), then remove from the heat.
5. Cool the mixture down by transferring it to a bowl over an iced water bath. Refrigerate for 24 hours if possible, then pour the custard into an ice cream maker and churn until frozen following the manufacturer's instructions; this will take about 50 minutes. Place in an airtight container and freeze until required.
6. Remove the ice cream from the freezer 5–10 minutes before serving. In the meantime, reheat the sweet white miso caramel sauce. Serve the hojicha ice cream with a generous drizzle of warm sauce.

GENMAICHA ICE CREAM

with Genmaicha, Sake and Brown Sugar Syrup
and Sweet Popcorn Rice

SERVES 8

For the genmaicha

custard/ice cream base

25g (1oz) loose genmaicha
tea or 4 genmaicha tea
bags
300ml (10fl oz/1¼ cups)
double (heavy) cream
600ml (1 pint/2½ cups)
whole milk
6 egg yolks
150g (5½oz/¾ cup) caster
(superfine) sugar

For the genmaicha, sake and brown sugar syrup

200g (7oz/1½ cups) brown
sugar
200ml (7fl oz/generous
¾ cup) water
25g (1oz) loose genmaicha
tea
75ml (2¾fl oz/⅓ cup) sake

For the sweet popcorn rice

1 quantity of unflavoured
Popcorn Rice (see page
132)
1–2 tbsp icing
(confectioner's) sugar

GENMAICHA TEA | SHORT-GRAIN RICE | SAKE

Genmaicha is a combination of dried green tea (cha) and toasted brown rice (genmai). This ice cream is nutty, aromatic and refreshing.

1. In a sealable container combine the genmaicha tea, cream and milk. Close the container and let this mixture infuse in the fridge for 24 hours. (If you are pressed for time, you can simply add the tea to the milk and cream mixture as you heat it to make the custard from step 2, below.)
2. Next, make the ice cream mixture. Add the genmaicha, milk and cream mixture to a pan, heat until nearly boiling, then simmer gently for 30 minutes. Remove from the heat, allow the mixture to cool down completely, then pass through a sieve (strainer), discarding the tea.
3. In a bowl, whisk together the egg yolks and sugar until the sugar is completely dissolved and the mixture has whitened.
4. Make a genmaicha custard by heating the genmaicha-infused milk and cream mixture until it starts to steam. Add the whisked egg yolk and sugar mix to the pan a little at a time, stirring constantly with a rubber spatula so that it does not catch on the bottom of the pan. Now, on a low heat, continue stirring for about 5 minutes until the custard thickens to coating consistency (when a line remains clear as it is drawn on the back of the spatula), then remove from the heat. Let the mixture cool down by transferring it to a bowl over an iced water bath. Refrigerate for 24 hours if possible.
5. Make the genmaicha, sake and brown sugar syrup. In a small pan, dissolve the brown sugar in the measured water, bring to the boil, remove from the heat and add the genmaicha tea. Mix well and let the tea infuse in the syrup for 1 hour. Pass through a fine sieve (strainer) into an airtight container, add the sake, mix well and refrigerate until needed.
6. Make the Popcorn Rice (see page 132), but without adding any flavourings. Instead, add the icing (confectioner's) sugar to the popped rice and mix thoroughly to coat.
7. Pour the genmaicha tea custard into an ice cream maker and churn until frozen following the manufacturer's instructions; this will take approximately 50 minutes. Place in an airtight container and freeze until required.
8. Partially thaw the ice cream for about 5 minutes before serving. Serve the genmaicha ice cream drizzled with genmaicha, sake and brown sugar syrup and topped with the sweet popcorn rice.

PANETTONE BREAD AND BUTTER PUDDING

with Genmaicha Custard

SERVES 8

600ml (1 pint/2½ cups)
double (heavy) cream
1.2 litres (2 pints/5 cups)
whole milk
50g (2oz) loose genmaicha
tea
12 egg yolks
300g (10½oz/1½ cups)
caster (superfine) sugar
100g (3½oz/½ cup) butter,
softened
500g (1lb 2oz) Italian
panettone, cut into several
1.5-cm (½-inch) thick slices
icing (confectioner's) sugar,
for dusting
4 tbsp toasted hazelnut nibs

GENMAICHA TEA

I love panettone, so adding genmaicha custard to it just seemed the most natural thing to do. A warming, wholesome and delicious dessert.

1. In a sealable container combine the cream, milk and genmaicha tea. Close the container and let this mixture infuse in the fridge for 24 hours. (If pressed for time, add the tea to the milk and cream mixture as you heat it in step 2.)
2. Add the milk, cream and genmaicha tea mixture to a pan, heat until nearly boiling, then simmer gently for 30 minutes, but do not let it boil. Remove from the heat, allow the mixture to cool down completely, then pass it through a sieve (strainer), discarding the tea. In a bowl, whisk together the egg yolks and sugar until the sugar is completely dissolved and the mixture has whitened.
3. Take half of the milk and cream mixture and combine it with half of the egg and sugar mixture, place in an airtight container and refrigerate until needed. This mixture will be used to bake the panettone bread and butter pudding.
4. Now make the genmaicha custard – in a pan heat the remaining milk and cream mixture until it starts to steam. Add the remaining egg and sugar mixture to the pan a little at a time, stirring constantly with a rubber spatula so that it does not catch on the bottom. On a low heat, continue stirring until the custard thickens to coating consistency (when a line remains clear as it is drawn on the back of the spatula), then remove from the heat. Allow the custard to cool down – you can speed this up by placing it over an iced water bath. Transfer to an airtight container and refrigerate until needed. The chilled genmaicha custard will be used as a sauce for the panettone bread and butter pudding.
5. An hour before serving, preheat the oven to 160°C/320°F/gas mark 3 and grease a large shallow baking dish with a little butter. Cut the panettone into wedges, leaving the crusts on. Butter the slices lightly with the rest of the butter. Cut the slices in half and arrange them in the dish, buttered side up. Pour the reserved, uncooked genmaicha-infused milk mixture over the panettone.
6. Bake for 30 minutes until the pudding is just set – it should be yellow inside and nicely browned on top. Allow it to cool for 5–10 minutes before serving.
7. To serve, dust the pudding with the icing (confectioner's) sugar and serve with spoonfuls of chilled genmaicha custard and a generous sprinkle of toasted hazelnut nibs.



MATCHA AND CLOTTED CREAM RICE PUDDING

with Maraschino Cherries

SERVES 4

120g (4oz/ $\frac{2}{3}$ cup) short-grain white rice
800ml (28fl oz/ $3\frac{1}{3}$ cups) whole milk
1 tbsp matcha green tea powder
100–150g ($3\frac{1}{2}$ – $5\frac{1}{2}$ oz/ $\frac{1}{2}$ – $\frac{3}{4}$ cup) caster (superfine) sugar
225g (8oz) clotted cream
100g ($3\frac{1}{2}$ oz) Maraschino cherries in syrup, or other good-quality black cocktail cherries in syrup, cut into halves. Alternatively, use fresh raspberries

MATCHA GREEN TEA POWDER

Japanese short-grain rice is such a versatile ingredient, you can eat it plain, flavoured, in risottos and even in puddings or in drinks. This Japanese rice pudding is made with matcha green tea powder and clotted cream and takes less than 30 minutes to whip up. You can serve it hot or cold (I prefer it cold) topped with luscious Maraschino or cocktail cherries. The pudding is unctuously rich due to the clotted cream and will keep for days in the fridge so make a big batch. It has become one of our household favourites!

1. Wash the rice in a bowl with plenty of fresh water using a circular motion with your hand. Drain the water and repeat 3 or 4 times until the water runs clear. Transfer the rice to a sieve (strainer) and let it drain for 15 minutes.
2. Add the milk and rice to a non-stick pan. Over a medium heat, bring the mixture to the boil stirring constantly so it does not burn and stick. As it reaches boiling point, reduce the heat to low and simmer for 20 minutes, stirring often.
3. Meanwhile, place the matcha powder in a tall plastic bowl or measuring jug (pitcher), add a couple of tablespoons of the hot milk and whisk vigorously to dissolve the matcha powder. I find an electric hand blender is a great help for this. Ensure that there are no matcha lumps left.
4. After 20 minutes of simmering, when most of the milk has evaporated, the mixture is thick and the rice is very soft, add the dissolved matcha powder and sugar to the pan. Stir well until completely combined then turn off the heat. Check for sweetness and add more sugar if desired as the astringency of the matcha powder will vary depending on its quality and provenance. Finally, add the clotted cream, mixing it well into the matcha rice pudding.
5. Ladle into 4 individual bowls, let it cool down, cover and refrigerate for a couple of hours. To serve, top with the Maraschino cherries and a drizzle of their syrup and enjoy.



From left to right: Matcha Gin Sour; Umeshu Fizz; Yuzu Marmalade and Whisky Highball; Sakerinha; Shochu Spritz.





SERVES 1

½ tsp matcha green tea powder
1 tbsp freshly squeezed lemon juice or yuzu juice
60ml (2¼ fl oz/¼ cup) gin
20ml (¾ fl oz/4 tsp) Le Sirop de Monin cane sugar syrup (or make your own – heat 1 part water with 1 part caster/superfine sugar until dissolved, let it cool down)
dash of Angostura bitters
1 small slice of lemon peel
edible flower
ice cubes

MATCHA GIN SOUR

MATCHA GREEN TEA POWDER

Matcha and gin, what a combination! Intensely jade green in colour with a light astringency and spice flavours from the tea and gin, this is a cocktail I have revisited more times than I can count. Dangerously good!

1. Place all the ingredients except the lemon peel and edible flower in a cocktail shaker. Close and shake vigorously for about 20 seconds until cold and the matcha has dissolved into the drink. Strain into a chilled Martini glass. Twist and drop a lemon peel slice and edible flower into the glass and serve.



SERVES 1

½ lime, washed, quartered (skin on), white pith removed from the centre, then chopped into small pieces
1 tbsp caster (superfine) sugar
1 basil or shiso leaf, plus 2–3 more to garnish (optional)
100ml (3½ fl oz/scant ½ cup) sake
ice cubes
edible flowers (optional)

SAKERINHA

SAKE

This is my take on the quintessential Brazilian cocktail called caipirinha, but with Japanese sake rather than cachaça – a Nikkei caipirinha!

1. Place the lime pieces, sugar and basil or shiso leaf, in a cocktail shaker and bruise with a pestle or rolling pin to extract the juice and mix all the ingredients together. Add the sake and enough ice cubes to fill the tumbler, close the shaker and shake it well until very cold. Drain into a chilled tumbler, garnish with the basil or shiso leaves and edible flowers, if using, and serve.

Variation: Cut 3–4 strawberries into small cubes and add them to the chilled glass with the other ingredients for a Strawberry and Basil Sakerinha.

SERVES 1

50ml (2fl oz/scant ¼ cup)
Japanese whisky (such as
Suntory)
50g (1¾oz) yuzu citron tea
marmalade
ice cubes
50ml (2fl oz/scant ¼ cup)
carbonated water

SERVES 1

25ml (1fl oz/5 tsp) rice
shochu
25ml (1fl oz/5 tsp) Aperol
ice cubes
100ml (3½fl oz/scant ½ cup)
tonic water
1 orange slice

SERVES 1

30ml (1fl oz/2 tbsp) umeshu
(Japanese plum wine)
90ml (3½fl oz/⅓ cup)
prosecco or cava
ice cubes
1 plum slice or wedge, skin
on
2 tsp simple sugar syrup
(optional)
edible flower (optional)

YUZU MARMALADE AND WHISKY HIGHBALL

SUNTORY JAPANESE WHISKY | YUZU MARMALADE

I love drinking Suntory whisky neat, on the rocks and in cocktails as in this yuzu-flavoured highball. Yuzu marmalade has great sweetness but also refreshing acidity and goes well with the smooth Japanese whisky.

1. Add the Japanese whisky and yuzu marmalade to a chilled high tumbler, mix well with a spoon until well combined. Add ice cubes to the brim of the glass, top with the carbonated water and gently stir. Serve.

SHOCHU SPRITZ

SAKE

Shochu (see page 225) has gained much popularity in Japan in recent years, with sales surpassing those of sake. I love drinking it with Italian Aperol and tonic water for a Japanese-inspired Spritz.

1. Add the shochu and Aperol to a chilled glass. Fill it with cubes of ice, top with the tonic water and orange slice. Mix well with a spoon and serve.

UMESHU FIZZ

UMESHU (JAPANESE PLUM WINE)

Umeshu is a sweet Japanese plum wine with bracing acidity. It is a great partner to sparkling wines, so if you happen to have a not-so-great bottle of cava or prosecco, adding umeshu will turn it into something rather special.

1. Add the Umeshu and prosecco or cava to a wine glass. Fill it up with ice cubes and add a plum slice. Check for sweetness, adding sugar syrup if desired. Serve with an edible flower if you wish.

MAKES 1.2 LITRES
(2 PINTS/5 CUPS)

180g (6½oz/1 cup) short-grain white rice
80g (3oz/½ cup) blanched almonds
5cm (2 inch) cinnamon stick, broken into small pieces
900ml (1½ pints/3¾ cups) water, hot but not boiling
100ml (3½fl oz/scant ½ cup) cold water
150g (5½oz/½ cup) sweetened condensed milk (or honey or sugar to taste for a dairy-free version)
ice, for serving
generous sprinkle of ground cinnamon, to garnish

JAPANESE RICE, ALMOND AND CINNAMON MILK

SHORT-GRAIN RICE

This drink was inspired by a recent trip to Mexico where I drank many a horchata. A doddle to make, but you will need to allow soaking time.

1. Wash the rice under cold running water for a couple of minutes to eliminate excess starch. Let it drain in a sieve (strainer) for 10 minutes. Place the rice, almonds and cinnamon stick into a bowl and add the measured hot water. Cover the bowl and refrigerate for at least 4 hours but preferably overnight.
2. Using a blender, blitz this mixture for 2–3 minutes until completely smooth. Pour the mixture into a fine sieve (strainer) set over a serving jug. Strain out as much liquid as possible, pushing on the solids with a spatula. Discard the solids. Stir in the cold measured water and the sweetened condensed milk (or honey or sugar), taste, and add more sweetener or water if necessary.
3. Add ice to the jug, stir, and serve in glasses, garnished with the cinnamon.



SERVES 2

8 tbsp strong espresso coffee
4 tbsp whole milk, chilled
4 tbsp condensed milk (optional)
2 tsp matcha green tea powder
8 tbsp hot water (around 80°C/176°F)
enough ice cubes to fill 2 serving tumblers

甘酒

BOTH DRINKS SERVE 4

NON-ALCOHOLIC
600ml (1 pint/2½ cups)
Ama Koji (see page 244)
300–600ml (10fl oz–
1 pint/1¼–2½ cups) water
1 tbsp grated root ginger

LIGHTLY ALCOHOLIC
120g (4oz) pressed sake kasu (sake lees), chopped up or crumbled if solid
600ml (1 pint/2½ cups) water
4 tbsp granulated sugar
pinch of salt
1 tbsp grated root ginger, to taste
4 root ginger slices, to garnish

ICED MATCHA ESPRESSO LATTE

MATCHA GREEN TEA POWDER

This is the perfect drink for those who like me sometimes cannot decide on either coffee or matcha green tea, so why not have both?

1. Make the espresso coffee and place in the fridge to chill. Mix the milk and condensed milk together until fully combined. If you prefer a sugar-free drink, skip this step but double the amount of full-fat milk used in the drink. In a bowl, sift the matcha using a fine strainer to remove lumps. Add the hot water and whisk vigorously until completely smooth. Now layer the drink in the following order - divide the milk mixture between two tumblers. Add ice cubes to fill the glasses to the brim. Very slowly pour in the matcha tea and finally the espresso coffee. Serve immediately.

AMAZAKE

Traditional Japanese 'Sweet Sake' Beverage

AMA KOJI | SAKE KASU

A very traditional Japanese hot beverage, enjoyed at winter time, like eggnog. It is thought to ward off colds and can be either non-alcoholic made with ama koji or lightly alcoholic made with sake lees.

NON-ALCOHOLIC AMAZAKE

1. Make the Ama Koji (see page 244) at least a day in advance. Dilute the Ama Koji in the measured water, slowly adding the water until you achieve your desired consistency. It should be a lightly thick beverage. Add the grated ginger to flavour it. This can be served either cold or warm. If serving warm, do not reheat it beyond 60°C (140°F) or the live enzymes in the koji will be killed.

LIGHTLY ALCOHOLIC AMAZAKE

1. Put the sake kasu in a pan with the measured water and allow to stand, covered, for several hours or overnight. The sake kasu will melt in the water – if it has not completely melted, stir it until you have a milky looking liquid. Add the sugar to the pan and stir over a medium-low heat until the mixture is warm and bubbling slightly. Add the salt and grated ginger. Serve hot with a slice of ginger for garnish, and use a spoon or chopsticks to stir while drinking.

*From left to right: Japanese Rice, Almond and Cinnamon Milk;
Lightly Alcoholic Amazake; Iced Matcha Espresso Latte.*



100g
¥237
半豆切粉 海老茶



200g
¥600
半豆切粉



SAUCES, MARINADES AND GARNISHES





HOW TO MAKE SHIO, SHOYU AND AMA KOJI

Salt, Soy Sauce and Sweet Koji Seasoning

Making your own shio, shoyu and ama koji means you can choose the ingredients that go into it, and it is very easy to make.

SHIO KOJI

MAKES ABOUT 600G (1LB 5OZ)

PREPARATION TIME 7 DAYS

300g (10½oz) rice koji (known as kome koji, available in Japanese grocery stores or online)
100g (3½oz/scant ½ cup) fine sea salt
300ml (10fl oz/1¼ cups) fresh water (preferably mineral water)

1. In a large bowl, break the rice koji into small pieces. Rub it firmly with your hands to separate into individual grains. Add the salt, mixing it well until the rice koji and salt start to stick together. Now add the water and mix it all again. If necessary, add more water until the koji is completely submerged.
2. Transfer to a sterilized jar with a lid. Make sure that the shio koji is immersed in water, if not, add some more water and close the jar tightly. Label it with the name and the date you made it.
3. Allow the shio koji to ferment at room temperature for at least 1 week but preferably 10 days in summer and 2–3 weeks in winter, mixing it once every day. Add more water if the shio koji becomes too stiff and make sure it is always covered in water. Salty at first, shio koji will gradually thicken up, becoming milder and sweeter due to the fermentation. Once ready, it can be stored in the fridge for up to 6 months.

SHOYU KOJI

MAKES ABOUT 500G (1LB 2OZ)

PREPARATION TIME 30 DAYS

200g (7oz) rice koji (known as kome koji, available in Japanese grocery stores or online)
400ml (13½fl oz/1½ cups) soy sauce

1. In a large bowl, break the rice koji into smaller pieces. Rub it firmly with your hands to separate into individual grains.
2. Transfer to a sterilized jar, pour in the soy sauce and stir well. Make sure the rice koji is completely submerged in the soy sauce.
3. Close the jar and allow it to ferment for at least 1 month at room temperature before using. Stir the mixture with a clean spoon once a day.
4. Once ready, refrigerate and use within 6 months.

AMA KOJI

MAKES 600G (1LB 5OZ)

200g (7oz) cooked short-grain white rice (see page 138)
200ml (7fl oz/¾ cup) water
200g (7oz) rice koji (known as kome koji, available in Japanese grocery stores or online)

1. Cook the white rice (see page 138). Add the measured water and mix well to make a runny porridge of the cooked rice and water, then cool it down to 60°C (140°F).



2. Crumble the rice koji into this porridge and stir to combine. At this stage you want to keep it at a constant temperature of about 60°C (140°F). You can do this by keeping the mixture inside a rice cooker which is turned to the 'warm' setting with the lid ajar and a tea towel (dish cloth) wrapped around over the top. You can also easily do this with a slow cooker set to 60°C (140°F). Allow the mixture to ferment overnight, about 8–10 hours at 60°C (140°F). Stir it a few times in the first 2–3 hours.

3. Never allow the mixture to go over 70°C (158°F) or the mould will be killed. If the mixture is too cold

(below 60°C/140°F), the ama koji will not turn sweet. Use a food thermometer to measure and maintain the optimum temperature.

4. When ready, transfer the sweet ama koji to a sterilized jar, close with a lid, refrigerate and use within a week.

5. Ama koji will continue fermenting, so the flavour will change over time and become less sweet, even in the fridge. To keep it stable, and the flavour and mould intact, you can store it in the freezer for up to 6 months. Thaw before using.



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SAUCES, MARINADES AND GARNISHES

TERIYAKI SAUCE

MAKES ABOUT 350ML (12FL OZ/1½ CUPS)

150ml (5fl oz/⅔ cup) soy sauce
150ml (5fl oz/⅔ cup) mirin
150ml (5fl oz/⅔ cup) sake
75g (2¾oz/⅓ cup) caster (superfine) or granulated sugar

1. Place all the ingredients in a pan and mix well to make sure that the sugar has completely dissolved. Bring to the boil then simmer uncovered until reduced by a quarter and lightly syrupy, about 10–15 minutes.
2. Let it cool down then transfer to a sterilized, airtight jar and refrigerate. This will keep for up to 4 weeks in the fridge.

Variations

The basic teriyaki sauce (above) can be infused with different ingredients. Just add any, or as many, of the following as you want to the hot teriyaki sauce:

2 garlic cloves, peeled and lightly bruised
1 large red chilli, cut in half lengthways
zest of 2 clementines or satsumas
2cm (¾ inch) piece of root ginger, peeled and thinly sliced

PONZU SAUCE

MAKES ABOUT 240ML (8FL OZ/1 CUP)

60ml (2fl oz/¼ cup) light soy sauce (usukuchi shoyu)
2 tbsp lemon juice
2 tbsp lime juice
60ml (2fl oz/¼ cup) Primary Dashi (see page 20)
or ¼ tsp instant dashi powder dissolved in 60ml (2fl oz/¼ cup) warm water
2 tbsp mirin
2 tbsp rice vinegar

1. Place all the ingredients in an airtight jar, close tightly and shake well. This will keep for up to 4 weeks in the fridge.

SESAME PONZU SAUCE

MAKES ABOUT 300ML (10FL OZ/1¼ CUPS)

60ml (2fl oz/¼ cup) light soy sauce (usukuchi shoyu)
1 tbsp mirin
5 tsp lemon juice
5 tsp lime juice
2 tbsp Primary Dashi (see page 20) or ¼ tsp instant dashi powder
5 tsp rice vinegar
2 tbsp toasted sesame oil
2 tsp caster (superfine) sugar
½ small onion, very finely chopped

1. Follow the method for Ponzu sauce (see left). This will keep for up to a week in the fridge.

YUZU-PON SAUCE

MAKES ABOUT 180ML (6FL OZ/¾ CUP)

60ml (2fl oz/¼ cup) light soy sauce (usukuchi shoyu)
1 tbsp mirin
50ml (2fl oz/¼ cup) yuzu juice (or a mix of tangerine, grapefruit and lime juice)
2 tbsp Primary Dashi (see page 20) or ¼ tsp instant dashi powder
5 tsp rice vinegar
1 tsp caster (superfine) sugar

1. Follow the method for Ponzu sauce (see left). This will keep for up to a week in the fridge.

NANBAN SAUCE

MAKES ABOUT 800ML (1 PINT 10FL OZ/3½ CUPS)

500ml (18fl oz/generous 2 cups) Primary Dashi (see page 20) or ½ tsp instant dashi powder dissolved in 500ml (18fl oz/2 cups) boiling water
2 whole spring onions (scallions)
125ml (4fl oz/½ cup) soy sauce

125ml (4fl oz/½ cup) rice vinegar
70g (2½oz/⅓ cup) caster (superfine) or granulated sugar
2 large red chillies, finely sliced
crushed chilli (dried red pepper) flakes or hot chilli sauce
(optional)

1. Make the Primary Dashi (see page 20). Char the spring onions (scallions) over a gas ring or under a hot grill (broiler) until blackened.
2. Place all the ingredients except the chilli (dried red pepper) flakes or hot chilli sauce in a pan over a medium heat and mix until the sugar has completely dissolved. Bring to the boil, then remove from the heat and let the dressing cool down to room temperature. Check for seasoning; if you would like more heat, add a pinch of chilli (dried red pepper) flakes or a few drops of chilli sauce.
3. Remove the spring onions (scallions), transfer the sauce to a sterilized jar and refrigerate. This will keep in the fridge for up to 4 days.

MISO, TOBANJAN CHILLI AND GARLIC SAUCE

SERVES 4

100g (3½oz) brown miso
75g (2¾oz) tobanjan chilli bean sauce
25ml (1fl oz/5 tsp) lemon juice
25g (1oz/1¼ tbsp) honey or 1 tbsp granulated sugar
3 garlic cloves, crushed
25ml (1fl oz/5 tsp) toasted sesame oil
100ml (3½fl oz/scant ½ cup) sunflower oil
2–4 tbsp water, to taste

1. Whisk all the ingredients except the water together in a bowl until well combined and smooth. The sauce will be slightly too thick, so add a couple of tablespoons of water and mix again. The desired consistency is of runny double (heavy) cream; add more water, 1 tablespoon at a time, if necessary.
2. Check for seasoning – the dressing should be very savoury and spicy with a gentle tartness. If too salty, add a bit more honey, sugar or sesame oil. This will keep for up to a week in the fridge.

KARASHI-SU-MISO Mustard, Rice Vinegar and White Miso Sauce

MAKES ABOUT 200ML (7FL OZ/¾ CUP)

100g (3½oz) sweet white miso (saikyo miso)
1 egg yolk, beaten
1 tbsp sake
1 tbsp sugar
60ml (2fl oz/¼ cup) water or Primary Dashi (see page 20)
1 tbsp rice vinegar
1 tsp Japanese karashi mustard powder (English mustard can be used but has a different flavour), dissolved in 1 tsp water, let ripen for 30 minutes.

1. In a bowl thoroughly mix the white miso, egg yolk, sake and sugar until smooth. Add the measured water or dashi and mix well. Transfer to a double-boiler over hot water and cook for 2–3 minutes, stirring constantly with a rubber spatula until it has thickened. If you do not have a double-boiler, cook the sauce over a very gentle heat. Remove from the heat and let it cool down to room temperature. Add the rice vinegar and prepared Japanese mustard, mixing them well into the sauce.
2. Transfer to an airtight container and refrigerate until needed. The sauce will keep for up to 1 week in the fridge.

KEY TO PAGES 246–7

A: KARASHI MAYO
B: PONZU SAUCE
C: TERIYAKI SAUCE
D: NANBAN SAUCE
E: MISO, TOBANJAN
CHILLI AND GARLIC
SAUCE
F: NITSUKE BROTH

G: JAPANESE KEWPIE-

STYLE MAYONNAISE
H: SHISO OIL
I: KARASHI-SU-MISO
J: YUAN MARINADE
K: GOMADARE
L: TEN TSUYU DIPPING
SAUCE
M: WASABI MAYONNAISE
DRESSING

TEN TSUYU DIPPING SAUCE

Tempura and Kakiage Fritter Dipping Sauce

MAKES 500ML (18FL OZ/GENEROUS 2 CUPS)

200ml (7fl oz/generous $\frac{3}{4}$ cup) Primary Dashi (see page 20),
or use $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp instant dashi powder dissolved in 200ml
(7fl oz/generous $\frac{3}{4}$ cup) boiling water
50ml (2fl oz/ $\frac{1}{4}$ cup) dark soy sauce
50ml (2fl oz/ $\frac{1}{4}$ cup) mirin
 $\frac{1}{4}$ daikon (white radish), finely grated (optional)

1. Make the Primary Dashi (see page 20). Add the soy sauce and mirin to the dashi, bring to the boil, then turn off the heat.
2. As the dipping sauce is usually served at room temperature it can be made in advance and kept in the fridge, just remove from the fridge an hour or so before needed.
3. Add a small pressed mound of finely grated daikon (white radish) to the middle of a dipping bowl, pour the sauce around the daikon (white radish) and serve. The sauce, without the added radish, will keep for up to 1 week in the fridge.

GOMADARE

Classic Sesame Dressing

MAKES ABOUT 400ML (13 $\frac{1}{2}$ FL OZ/1 $\frac{1}{2}$ CUPS)

180ml (6 $\frac{1}{4}$ fl oz/3 $\frac{3}{4}$ cups) Primary Dashi (see page 20)
90g (3 $\frac{1}{4}$ oz/ $\frac{2}{3}$ cup) white sesame seeds
90ml (3 $\frac{1}{4}$ fl oz/ $\frac{1}{3}$ cup) soy sauce
2 tbsp mirin
1 tbsp caster (superfine) sugar
2 tbsp sake (optional)

1. Make the Primary Dashi (see page 20). Dry-fry the white sesame seeds in a heavy frying pan (skillet) over a medium heat until lightly golden, this should only take a few minutes. Shake the pan constantly and stir the seeds. If they burn you will need to discard them and start again.
2. Transfer the sesame seeds to a pestle and mortar and grind the seeds until flaky. In Japan, a suribachi

(a Japanese grinding bowl with an indented surface) is normally used. Add the soy sauce, mirin, sugar and sake, if using, and mix well. Add the dashi a little at a time, mixing well after each addition. This will keep in an airtight container in the fridge for up to a week.

GOMADARE

Easy Sesame Dressing

MAKES ABOUT 400ML (13 $\frac{1}{2}$ FL OZ/1 $\frac{1}{2}$ CUPS)

100ml (3 $\frac{1}{2}$ fl oz/ $\frac{1}{2}$ cup) soy sauce
100ml (3 $\frac{1}{2}$ fl oz/ $\frac{1}{2}$ cup) mirin
8 tbsp Japanese sesame paste (neri-goma) or tahini paste
3 tbsp rice vinegar
2–3 tbsp caster (superfine) sugar

1. Place all the ingredients in a bowl and mix well. The mixture will curdle, but don't worry, continue mixing and it will bind again. Add a little water or tahini, if needed, until the sauce has the consistency of double (heavy) cream.
2. Check for seasoning and adjust if necessary. This will keep in an airtight container in the fridge for up to a week.

JAPANESE KEWPIE-STYLE MAYONNAISE

MAKES ABOUT 400ML (13 $\frac{1}{2}$ FL OZ)

1 tbsp rice vinegar
1 tbsp cider vinegar
2 tbsp lemon juice
 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp sea salt
2 tsp caster (superfine) sugar
 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp Japanese karashi mustard (paste) or English mustard
 $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp garlic powder (optional)
 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp instant dashi powder
3 egg yolks, at room temperature
240ml (8fl oz/1 cup) sunflower oil

1. Add the rice vinegar, cider vinegar, lemon juice, salt, sugar, mustard, garlic powder and instant dashi powder to a food processor, and whizz until the dashi

powder and salt are thoroughly dissolved. Add the egg yolks and blend until well combined.

2. With the motor still running, slowly drizzle in the sunflower oil in a thin, steady stream. The mixture should emulsify to a creamy texture.

3. Check for seasoning, but do not add much more salt at this stage as any salt added after the oil has been incorporated will dissolve slowly into the mixture and you might end up with a rather salty mayonnaise the following day. Transfer the mayonnaise to a sterilized, airtight jar and store in the fridge for up to a week.

KARASHI MAYO

Japanese Mustard-Mayonnaise

MAKES 125G (4½OZ)

100g (3½oz) Japanese Kewpie-style Mayonnaise (see opposite) or shop-bought Japanese mayonnaise
1 tbsp Japanese karashi mustard paste made from 1 tbsp Japanese mustard powder dissolved in 1 tbsp water, let ripen for at least 30 minutes (English mustard can be used but has a different flavour)
pinch of sea salt

1. Mix all the ingredients together in a bowl. Transfer to a sterilized jar and refrigerate until needed. This will keep for up to a week in the fridge.

WASABI MAYONNAISE DRESSING

MAKES ABOUT 175G (6¼OZ)

75g (2¾oz) Japanese Kewpie-style Mayonnaise (see opposite) or shop-bought Japanese mayonnaise
75g (2¾oz) Greek-style natural yoghurt or crème fraîche
15–20g (½–¾oz) wasabi paste
2 tsp lemon juice
pinch of sea salt

1. Mix all the ingredients together in a bowl until well combined. Check for seasoning and add more salt, or more wasabi if you like it spicier. This will keep in an airtight container in the fridge for up to a week.

SHISO OIL

MAKES ABOUT 150ML (5FL OZ/⅔ CUP)

50g (1¾oz) shiso (stalks and leaves), washed, patted dry and roughly chopped
200ml (7fl oz/¾ cup) sunflower oil

1. In a small pan add the shiso and sunflower oil. Place the pan on a very gentle heat and warm the oil through until barely lukewarm and the shiso is wilted, about 3 minutes. Take off the heat and place the pan in a bowl of iced water to cool down quickly, retaining the green colour of the shiso.

2. Blend the oil and shiso in a food processor until smooth. Transfer the shiso and oil mix to a bowl, cover it and let it infuse in the fridge for at least 2 hours, or up to 2 days.

3. Strain the mixture through a fine sieve (strainer) or a paper coffee filter into a sterilized jar and refrigerate until needed. The oil will keep for up to 4 weeks in the fridge.

Variations

To make Coriander (Cilantro), Tarragon or Basil Oil, simply replace the shiso with the relevant herb.

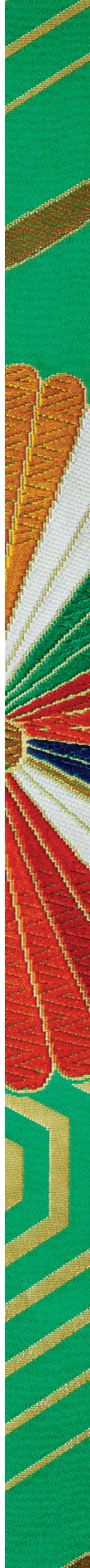
NITSUKE BROTH

Japanese Broth Using Sake, Mirin and Soy Sauce

MAKES ABOUT 460ML (16FL OZ/2 CUPS)

100ml (3½fl oz/scant ½ cup) sake
180ml (6fl oz/¾ cup) Primary Dashi (see page 20)
100ml (3½fl oz/scant ½ cup) mirin
40ml (1½fl oz/8 tsp) light soy sauce (usukuchi shoyu)
80ml (3fl oz/⅓ cup) soy sauce
4 root ginger slices (½cm/¼ inch thick, 2cm/¾ inch in diameter), optional

1. In a pan, combine all the ingredients over a medium heat and mix well. Bring to the boil, then turn off the heat. The broth is ready to be used, or it can be kept in the fridge for a few days.



YUAN MARINADE

Soy, Mirin, Sake and Yuzu or Lime Marinade

MAKES ABOUT 100ML (3½ FL OZ/SCANT ½ CUP)

zest of ½ lime
1 tbsp yuzu or lime juice
2 tbsp sake
2 tbsp soy sauce
2 tbsp mirin

1. Mix all the ingredients together in a container or shallow bowl. Refrigerate until needed. This marinade will keep in the fridge for up to a week.

KONBU NO TSUKUDANI

Konbu Caramelized in Soy Sauce, Sake and Sugar

MAKES ABOUT 150G (5½ OZ)

100g (3½ oz) rehydrated konbu (can use rehydrated shiitake mushrooms or canned baby clams as alternatives)
50ml (2 fl oz/¼ cup) sake
15ml (1 tbsp) rice vinegar
50ml (2 fl oz/¼ cup) soy sauce
50g (1¾ oz/⅓ cup) granulated sugar
1 tsp white sesame seeds (optional)

1. You can use the leftover konbu from Primary or Secondary Dashi (see pages 20–21) for this recipe. Cut the rehydrated konbu into thin strips.
2. Place the konbu, sake and rice vinegar in a small pan. Pour in just enough water to cover the konbu, bring to the boil and then simmer gently on a low heat until softened. Add the soy sauce and sugar and continue simmering for about 20 minutes until the liquid has mostly evaporated.
3. Take the pan off the heat and mix in the white sesame seeds, if using. Let it cool down then transfer to a sterilized jar. It can be kept in the fridge in an airtight, sterilized jar for a few months.

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Luiz's work has been featured in a number of British media including *The Independent*, *The Evening Standard* and *The Guardian*, as well as having written for *Time Out London*, BBC Good Food Channel and *The Telegraph*. Luiz is the author and founder of The London Foodie blog, founded in 2009 and regularly listed as one of the top 10 UK food blogs.

Luiz is the UK authority on Nikkei cuisine, a hybrid of Japanese cooking created by Japanese migrants to South America. His first cookbook, *Nikkei Cuisine: Japanese Food the South American Way*, was published in 2015 in all English-speaking countries by Jacqui Small, and was subsequently translated into five languages and published in eight foreign editions to date.

In his second cookbook, *The Japanese Larder: Bringing Japanese Ingredients Into Your Everyday Cooking*, Luiz explores the uses of Japanese ingredients for home cooks all over the world in both traditional Japanese and modern recipes.

Connect with Luiz and discover more of his work at <http://www.luizhara.com> or via his social media channels on Instagram, Twitter and Facebook as @TheLondonFoodie.







The Japanese Larder is an inspirational cookbook that celebrates the diversity and versatility of Japanese ingredients from tofu and persimmon to green teas and dashi broth. With over 100 traditional and innovative dishes, Luiz introduces ingredients in authentic Japanese recipes and shows how the same ingredients can transform all types of non-Japanese dishes. With delicious and easy-to-make everyday recipes, you can discover how to use leftover miso, noodles or soy sauce to elevate any dish into a mouth-watering meal.

Luiz Hara is a Le Cordon Bleu trained chef, highly regarded food and travel writer, and the author of *Nikkei Cuisine*.



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