

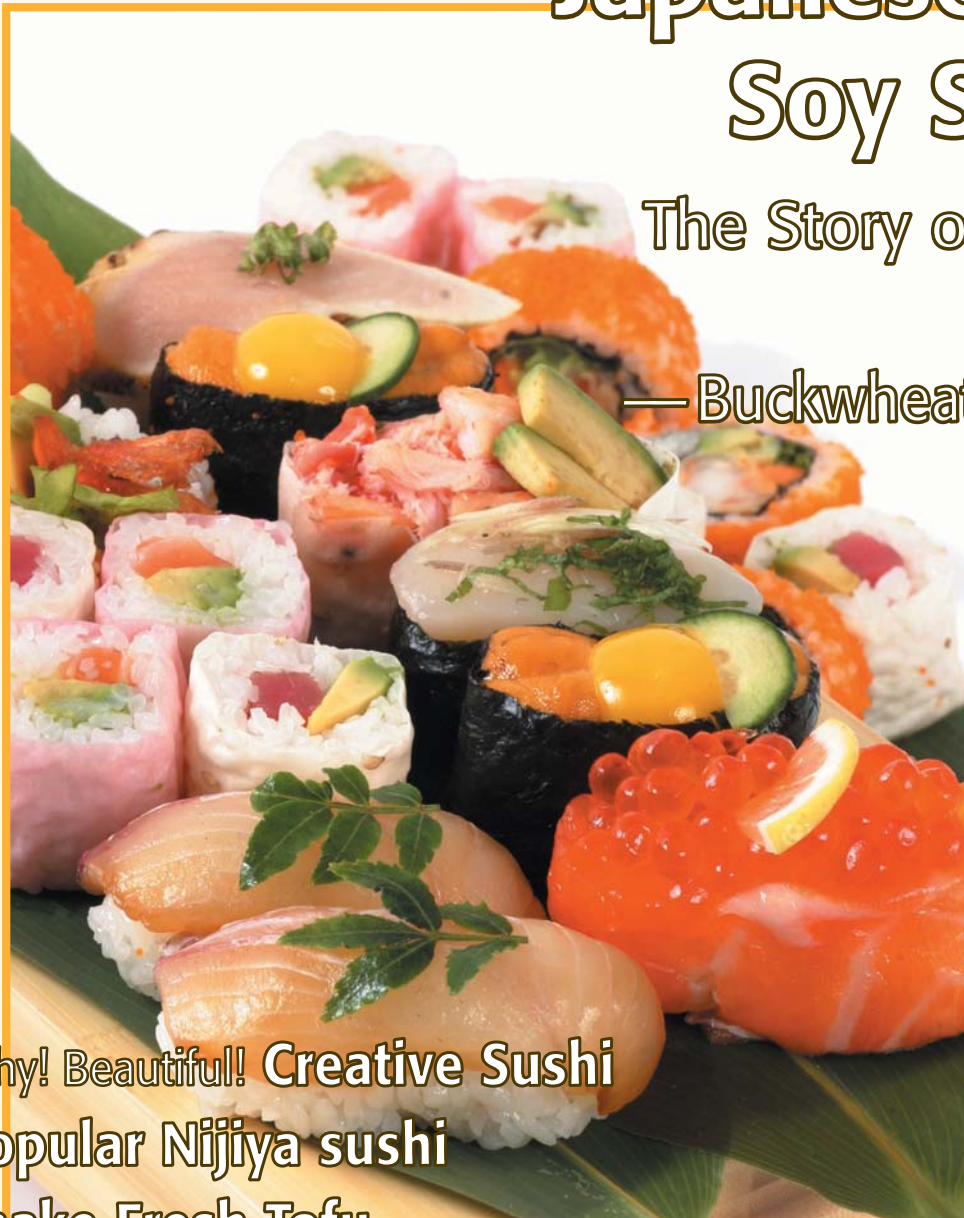
*Plenty of
Recipes*

Primary Edition

Gochiso

Ultimate Japanese Gourmet Magazine

Japanese Deli
Soy Sauce
The Story of Nori
Soba
— Buckwheat Noodles



Fresh! Healthy! Beautiful! **Creative Sushi**
Hugely popular Nijiya sushi
How to make Fresh Tofu
Nijiya's Sozai Deli Foods

JAPANESE DELI

Hiromi Hayashi — *The top chef in Japanese Delicatessen*

*“Eat deliciously
cooked seasonal
vegetables”.*
*Nijiya brought
such Japanese
traditions into
its deli.*

Japanese are sensitive with the change of seasons and always try to have seasonal food, especially vegetables. Even delis there change their vege menu according to the season. I am hoping, therefore, to have these seasonal vegetable dishes at my delis and hoping American people will enjoy them.

Speaking about cooking vegetables, I found “blanching” has become a trend. Blanching is cooking vegetables in liquid very quickly. In Japan blanching lettuce is becoming popular. I suggest blanching lettuce in oden broth. Cook a head of lettuce in oden broth for 1 minute and eat with mustard like regular oden. (Oden is a typical winter dish with some winter vegetables and fish cakes cooked for a long time in a large pot.) It is very good. Same as tomato. Cook peeled whole tomato in the oden broth for 2 to 3 minutes. Romaine lettuce or watercress will work wonderfully, too. These are worth try.

You may think lettuce and tomato are for salad. You actually see many people eating a big plate of salad or raw vegetable with dip here in the States. Vegetables, however, shrink into 1/3 of its raw volume when cooked. That means you can eat 3 times more vegetables without bloating. For health reasons, too, I wish to spread the benefits of blanched green leaves to everybody in America.

With Japanese dishes, what is necessary is rice.

I think Japanese are the only ones in the world who like to eat rice plain unseasoned. In most rice eating countries either Spain or Italy or South East Asians, rice is usually cooked or fried with seasoning. Chinese more likely mount other food on top of plain rice and eat them together. Koreans often pour soup over plain rice. But in Japan, the rice declares its independence. Japanese love to taste the subtle but rich sweetness of rice itself. Because of that, we are particular about the cooking technique as much as we care about the rice grain.

So how can we cook rice right? Here are some tips from me. Rinse and soak the rice in water at least one hour before cooking. If you don't enough time, soak it in warm water (about 40°C) for at least 15 minutes. The point is to let the rice absorb water beforehand.

People also say you should let the rice sit and self steam in the cooker for a while after it is finished cooking. This is true especially if you want to keep rice tasty even after it is cooled.

But do you really know when you can have the truly very best rice? It comes right after the rice is cooked, before self steaming begins, at the moment the electric cooker tells you “it's done”.

In the course of “kaiseki”, a small amount of this gem of rice is served at the very first course. It is called “ichimonji gohan”.

When you open the lid of the bowl at your left, you will find it in horizontal rectangular shape. This rice is scooped from the side of the cooker at the moment cooking is done. But this ultimate taste would disperse in a blink. That's why the chef serves only one bite or two in hope that the guests will experience this precious moment.

The “ichimonji gohan”, by the way, is always accompanied with a bowl of soup and sunomono. Sunomono is a cold dish with sugared vinegar. With traditional Japanese meal, “sunomono” is always served first to increase the appetite. It is a must item in a bento box, too.

In spring, “nuta” is a popular kind of sunomono. (Nuta sauce is made with sugared vinegar and miso) Wakegi and clam nuta, wakegi and chopped tuna nuta, wakegi and octopus sunomono, hotaru squid will take the place of octopus in late spring. Kabu radish sweet and sour pickle, orange radish pickle (pickled in vinegar, orange juice, sugar and salt) are good choices.



About the writer:

He is the principal of “Nihon Food Service Senmon Gakuin” He owns a deli food factory in Okinawa. He is also active as a consultant of food business. His practical advice from management to menu selection to cooking has helped many delis and grocery stores throughout Japan. “American Seafood Restaurant” in Akasaka, Tokyo is one that he led to success. His cooking is reputed not only tasty but also healthy. He has written several books and created a monthly magazine “Souzai Deli Jyoho Mansaibin”.

Japanese Dishes

Over the past several years, Nijiya Market has been dedicated to providing a variety of delicious deli dishes, like those you see in the food floors of department stores in Japan, and has added a number of popular items to our menus. Kinpira gobo (sauteed burdock root) packs dietary fiber, which is a well-known aid to bowel movement. Okara (tofu pulp) is also a good source of dietary fiber and a low-calorie food. Its calcium content is comparable to an equal amount of milk, making it effective for the prevention of bone loss (osteoporosis). Hijiki seaweed is rich in vitamin A, which helps maintain healthy skin, and iron, which helps prevent excessive sensitivity to cold, stiff neck and shoulders, and malignant anemia. Other popular dishes we carry include potato salad, macaroni salad, gobo salad, simmered vegetable dishes, broiled salted fish (such as mackerel) and simmered fish dishes. Along with these popular standard items we also offer limited-time-only dishes using seasonal fish and vegetables. These selections are part of the secret to our continuing customer satisfaction.



Kabocha nimono



Chikuzen-ni



Potato Salad



Okara



Takenoko nimono



Sansai

Would you like to make traditional Japanese dishes?



Kinpira gobo
(sauteed burdock root)

INGREDIENTS (4 Servings):

- 1 medium burdock root, scrubbed oil
- 2 tablespoons sake
- 2 tablespoons dark soy sauce
- 1 scant tablespoon sugar or to taste
- 1/4 tablespoon red pepper flakes (ichimi) or seven-spice mixture (shichimi)

DIRECTIONS:

1. Cut burdock in shavings as if sharpening a pencil. Keep cut burdock in water to avoid discoloration.
2. Coat the bottom of a frying pan with a few Tbsps oil, heat,

and add vegetable. Stir-fry over high heat till vegetable begins to soften (about 3 minutes). Add the sake to the pan, stir in the soy sauce and sugar, and continue frying over medium heat till the liquid has been almost completely reduced. Stir occasionally to keep the vegetable from sticking to the pan. Flavor to taste with red pepper flakes or seven-spice mixture.

3. Serve hot or at room temperature. Keeps one week, refrigerated in a sealed container.

INGREDIENTS (4 Servings):

- 2 oz hijiki
- 2 oz carrots
- 1 x age (deep-fried tofu) puff
- 1/3 x block hard tofu
- 5 x green beans
- 2 tbl sesame oil
- 1 cup dashijiru (soup stock)
- 3 tablespoons soy sauce
- 2 tablespoons sake
- 2 tablespoons
- 1 teaspoon white sesame seeds lightly sauteed

DIRECTIONS:

1. Rinse the hijiki in a fine-mesh strainer under cold running water. In 3 times the amount of warm water, soak for 10 to 15 minutes. Remove the hijiki with a tea strainer. (Sand and pebbles will sink to the bottom of the bowl.) Return to fine-mesh strainer and drain off excess water. Grate the carrots into matchstick slivers. Dip the age puff for 30 seconds in boiling water, and cut into matchstick

Simmered hijiki seaweed

slivers. Place tofu in a heated skillet and mash with a spatula. Let it simmer in its own water until reduced to small crumbs. Snap the ends off the green beans and place in boiling water for 1 to 2 minutes. Immerse in iced water, drain, and cut into 1/2-inch-long pieces.

2. In a heated skillet, saute sesame oil, hijiki, carrots, age, and tofu (all completely drained of water). When ingredients have acquired a shiny appearance, add dashijiru, shoyu, sake and mirin. Reduce heat to low and cook, stirring frequently, until liquid has been absorbed. Turn off heat and add green beans.
3. Place B in serving dish, sprinkle with sauteed sesame seeds. If you like, add seven-taste pepper to taste.

Deep-Fried Dishes



Among all Japanese homestyle dishes, tempura and other deep-fried dishes are particularly popular. However, it can be dangerous to handle a large amount of heated cooking oil, and many people don't like cleaning up spattered grease or dispose of used oil. This is when Nijiya deep-fried dishes come in handy. The meat counters and delis in Japan's supermarkets are thriving, and people even wait in line to buy popular tonkatsu, kushikatsu and yakitori.

Often deep-fried dishes don't taste good. This because of oxidation of the

oil, the preservatives or chemical seasonings that are used to keep the oil from oxidizing.

Nijiya deep-fried dishes are made with natural ingredients and seasonings. They're cooked and fried with our original techniques to attain a crispy exterior and a tender, juicy interior.

Japanese people of the Meiji period thought of "the West" as "Europe." During this period many dishes were imported from France, Germany and England, and over the ensuing years they were further developed and tailored to Japanese people's tastes. Today they're categorized as Western-style dishes.

Typical Western-style dishes include korokke (Japanese potato croquette), tonkatsu and ebi furai (deep-fried breaded shrimp), etc., which are all-time favorites.

Korokke has long been a popular dish and one that is representative of Japan.

Tempura, tonkatsu (breaded deep-fried pork cutlet), kushikatsu (skewered deep-fried pork) and yakitori (skewered grilled chicken)

EASY HOMEMADE SAUCE FOR DEEP-FRIED FOODS

● TARTAR SAUCE

Combine a small amount of Japanese mustard with mayonnaise and stir in chopped onions and parsley. It goes great with seafood, deep-fried chicken and sandwiches.



● FRY SAUCE

Heat white wine till it boils. Stir in twice as much ketchup as the white wine, a small amount of soup bouillon cube, butter and pepper. This sauce is excellent for korokke, tonkatsu, hamburgers, kushikatsu, etc.



It is flavored in various ways through the use of potatoes and other select ingredients.

Tonkatsu is a great dish in the sense that it has produced tonkatsu-ya, restaurants specializing in the dish. It's a simple food made of pork, breadcrumbs and cooking oil. However, it isn't that simple to make delicious tonkatsu. Tonkatsu is also used in the best-selling donburi (rice bowl) called katsudon. Tonkatsu is simmered in dashi soup stock, egg and green onion, and is then placed atop white rice.

Ebi furai, aji furai (deep-fried breaded horse mackerel), whitefish furai (deep-fried breaded whitefish), kushikatsu, tempura, fried curry bread, anko (red bean paste) donuts, etc.: these deep-fried dishes represent our memories and dreams.



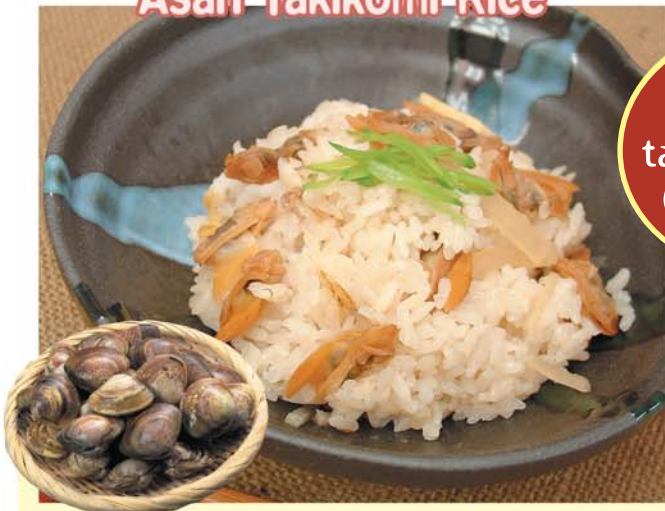
Nijiya Rice

Nijiya Market carries Furusato Rice (a private brand item), along with popular organic rice brands such as “Akitakomachi,” “Nijiya Rice” and glutinous rice. As for organic rice, both white and brown rice are available. We offer three different polishing levels of 30, 50 and 70 percent, to suit your preferences.

Some people want to try brown rice for its health benefits, but it can be a bit difficult to eat. For such customers, we recommend starting with organic rice with a 30 percent polish rate. It’s easier to eat and at the same time allows you to enjoy the flavor of brown rice. Our rice is available in convenient 5 lb. and 12 lb. sizes.



Asari Takikomi Rice



◆**INGREDIENTS (Serves 3 to 4):**
 1 abura-age (thin, deep-fried tofu)
 1/2 medium daikon radish
 About 3 cups dashi soup stock
 3 gou (18 oz) rice
 Salt (adequate amount)
 About 7 oz Asari clams (without shells)

For the broth for Asari clams
 3 tablespoons sake
 2 tablespoons mirin (rice wine)
 3 tablespoons soy sauce
 Ginger root (small amount)

◆**DIRECTIONS:**

1. Preparation: Rinse the rice 30 minutes to 1 hour before cooking; drain in a strainer. In lightly salted water, clean the Asari clams by hand with a light kneading motion; drain in a strainer. Julienne the ginger root. Peel the daikon radish and slice into strips. Pour boiled water over the

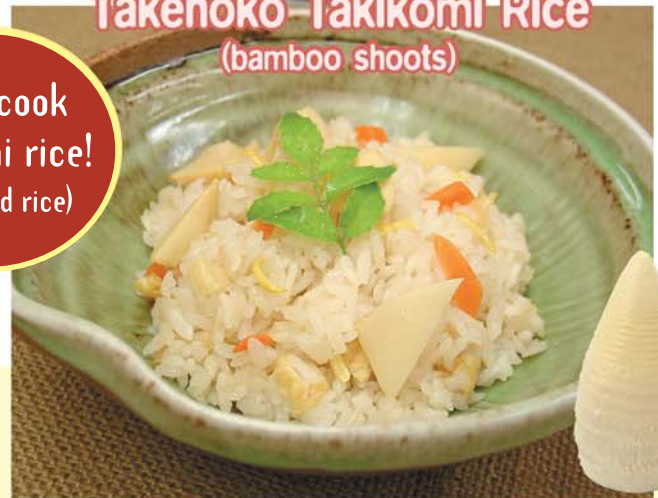
abura-age to remove the excess oil, drain, and cut it into thin strips.

2. Cook the daikon radish in large amount of boiling, lightly salted water for a few minutes. Drain it in a strainer.

3. In a saucepan, heat the broth ingredients till boiling. Add the clams. Simmer, stirring constantly with chopsticks. (Never overcook the clams, as they will shrink.)

4. Place the rice and broth in a rice cooker. Pour dashi soup stock up to the 3-gou level, and then add the abura-age and daikon. Cook on the “regular” setting. Once the rice is done, add the Asari clams; stir to fluff. Serve in bowls, garnished with kinusaya peas (snow peas) if desired.

Takenoko Takikomi Rice (bamboo shoots)



◆**INGREDIENTS (Serves 3 to 4):**
 10.5 oz takenoko (bamboo shoots)
 1 abura-age (thin, deep-fried tofu)
 1/2 medium carrot
 For the broth:
 1 cup dashi soup stock
 1 tablespoon mirin
 2 tablespoons light-colored soy sauce
 3 gou (18 oz) rice
 About 2 cups dashi soup stock

For the seasoning:

2 tablespoons sake
 1 tablespoon mirin
 2 tablespoons light-colored soy sauce

◆**DIRECTIONS:**

1. Preparation: Rinse the rice 30 minutes to 1 hour before cooking; drain in a strainer. Thinly slice the takenoko into desired size. Finely chop the carrot. Pour boiled water

over the abura-age to remove excess oil, drain, and cut into thin strips.

2. In a saucepan, cook the takenoko, carrot and abura-age in dashi soup stock. Once it boils, add mirin and light-colored soy sauce. When it boils again, lower the heat and cover, simmering for about ten minutes. Remove from heat and cool.

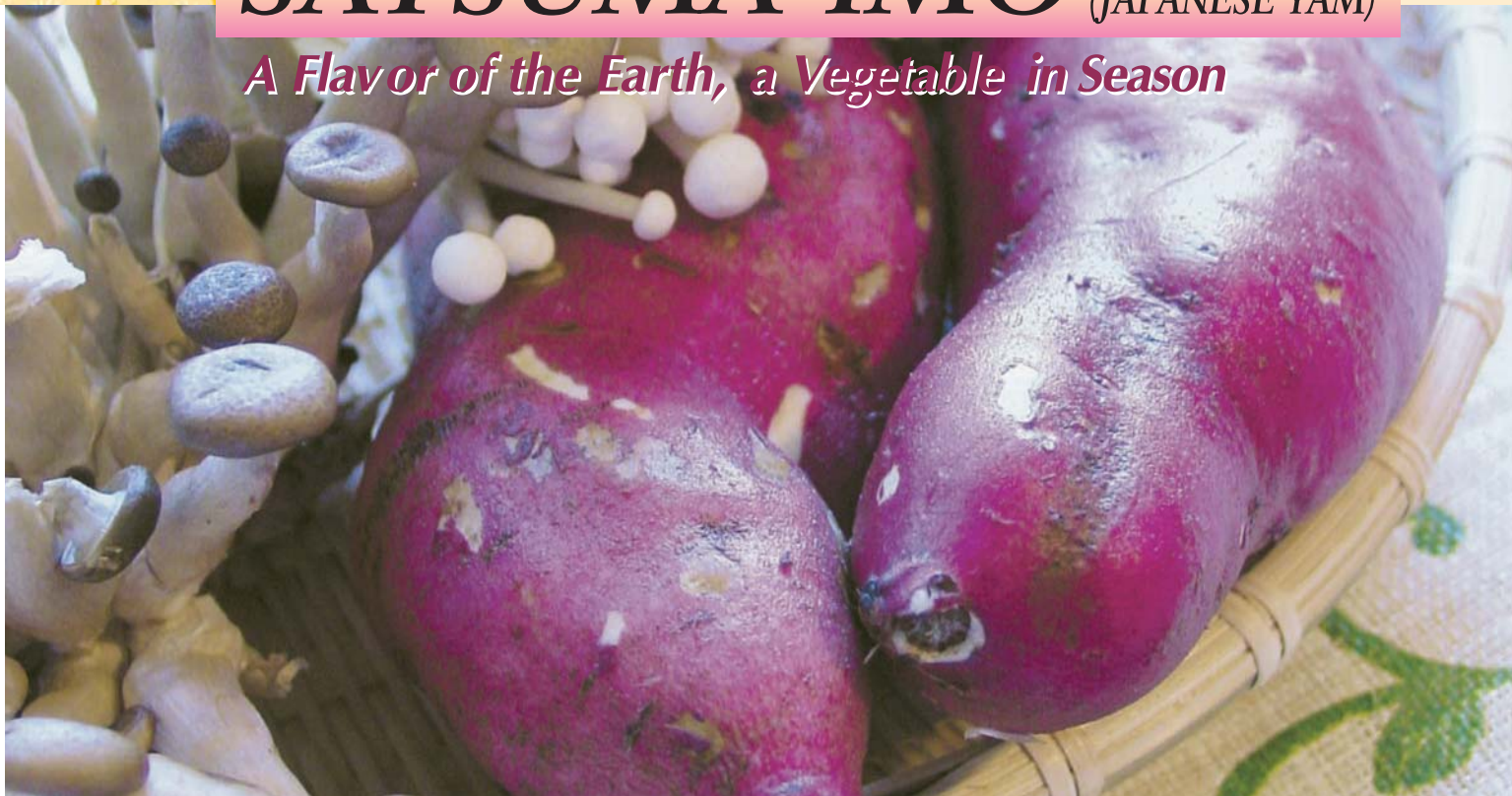
3. In a rice cooker, put the rice and the broth from step 2 above. Pour dashi soup stock up to the 3-gou level.

4. Stir in the sake, mirin and light-colored soy sauce. Add the simmered ingredients from step 2, and cook on the “regular” setting. Once the rice is done, stir to fluff. Serve in bowls, garnished with kinome (pepper leaf buds) if desired.

Let's cook takikomi rice!
(seasoned rice)

SATSUMA-IMO (JAPANESE YAM)

A Flavor of the Earth, a Vegetable in Season



Roots

The Satsuma-imo, or Japanese yam, originated in the region of Mexico and Guatemala and was a common crop earlier than 3000 B.C. It was brought to Europe in the fifteenth century by Christopher Columbus, and was introduced from Spain into China at the end of the sixteenth century. After that, the Satsuma-imo was brought from China through the Ryukyu Islands, Tanegashima and Satsuma, at the southern tip of Japan. In the mid-Edo period, Konyo Aoki, a scholar of Western studies, began cultivating the plant in the Kanto region, and soon it was a widespread crop. The Japanese name “Satsuma-imo” is derived from the fact that the Satsuma (Kagoshima) region was the one in which this vegetable was raised. It is well known that the Satsuma-imo helped many people survive during a time when food was scarce in Japan. Later, many new varieties were created to satisfy the tastes of the Japanese. In the U.S., the Satsuma-imo is called “Japanese yam” to distinguish it from the sweet potato. In Japan, Satsuma-imo goes by other names

too. It’s called “kara-imo” or “ryukyu-imo” in the Satsuma (Kagoshima) region and “nmu” or “kara-imo” in the Ryukyu (Okinawa) region. In the six centuries after Columbus brought Satsuma-imo to Europe, it had traveled around the globe, being named after the regions where it was cultivated. Thus it was transformed into the delicious Satsuma-imo we enjoy today.

Nutritional Value

The Satsuma-imo, which is abundant in starch and sugar, is also rich in calcium, vitamin C, kalium and dietary fiber. Its vitamin C content is comparable to grapefruit, and is also resistant to heat. The type with yellow flesh contains carotene. When the Satsuma-imo is cut, a slimy white substance appears on the surface. This is called jalapin, a resin component that aids in digestion. Jalapin works together with dietary fiber, which explains why eating Satsuma-imo can relieve constipation. When cooked at 160 to 180°F for several hours, Satsuma-imo’s natural sweetness and sugar content are increased through enzymatic action, making it even more delicious.

Season

Since the Satsuma-imo is available all year, it’s hard to tell when Satsuma-imo is in season. In the U.S., the greatest production of Japanese yams centers in Livingston, California. The first crops arrive on the market in early August, but full-fledged harvest starts in September, when the product is at its best. The harvesting period lasts until March or so, after which the Satsuma-imo you see on the market are generally taken from cold storage.

A highly popular Satsuma-imo called “Beniazuma” and “Benikomachi” has a bright red skin and light yellow flesh. “Nakamurasaki,” which has a brownish yellow skin and purple flesh, has a more refined flavor and pronounced sweetness. Thanks to its abundant carotene, it’s one of today’s most popular varieties. It’s ideal for use in dishes like Kinton (sweet mashed Japanese yam), Imoan (mashed Japanese yam), and Imo Yokan (a block-shaped cake made of Japanese yam).



Takikomi Rice with Satsuma-imo

■ INGREDIENTS (SERVES 4):

1 1/2 cups rice
 1/2 cup glutinous rice (Japanese mochigome)
 1 small Satsuma-imo
 2 packs fresh mushrooms (any variety)
 1 small piece fresh ginger root [A]
 2 tablespoons sake
 1 teaspoon salt
 1 teaspoon light-colored soy sauce
 Black sesame seeds for garnish

■ DIRECTIONS:

1. Rinse the rice and glutinous rice together till the water runs clear. Put in a rice cooker and add the specified amount of water, then reduce the amount of water by 2 tablespoons (the

amount of seasoning [A]).

2. Cut the yam lengthwise into quarters, and slice each quarter crosswise into 0.25-inch thickness (0.7 cm). Immerse in salted water (as salty as seawater) for about 10 minutes (but not more than 15 minutes).
 3. Cut the mushrooms into bite-size pieces. Peel the ginger root and slice into julienne strips, cutting with the grain.
 4. Stir [A] into the rice 1; place Satsuma-imo, mushrooms, and ginger root on top, and cook immediately.
 5. Once the rice is done, let it rest several minutes in the rice cooker. Scoop in a serving bowl and sprinkle with black sesame seeds.

Satsuma-imo Korokke (Japanese Yam Croquettes)

■ INGREDIENTS (SERVES 4):

3.5 oz. (100g) ground raw chicken
 2 Satsuma-imo
 1/2 chopped onion
 1 egg
 1 cup dry bread crumbs
 1/2 cup flour
 Cooking oil for deep-frying
 Salt and pepper to taste

■ DIRECTIONS:

1. Peel the yams and cut into 1-inch thick (3 cm) slices. Soak in water.
 Place the yams in a saucepan

filled with cold water and cook till tender. Test with a wooden toothpick, which should come out clean. Drain and mash.

2. Finely chop the onion and cook in a skillet. Add ground chicken and cook till it's no longer pink. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

3. Combine the yams, onion and chicken in a bowl; remove and shape into rectangular rounds. Coat with breadcrumbs and fry in oil at 360(F (180(C) till crispy and golden.



Healthy Daigaku-imo (Candied Japanese Yams)

■ INGREDIENTS (SERVES 4):

1 large Satsuma-imo
 Cooking oil for deep-frying
 Black sesame seeds for garnish [A]
 1/2 cup sugar
 1/4 cup water
 1 teaspoon soy sauce
 1/2 teaspoon sesame seed oil

■ DIRECTIONS:

1. Cut the yam into 2-inch thick (5 to 6 cm) slices. Peel the skin deeply, and set the skin aside. Cut the yam lengthwise into six to eight equal parts of

half-moon shape. Slice the skin into strips of equal length and immerse together with the yam in salted water (as salty as seawater). Pat dry.

2. Heat oil. Place the yam in oil while the temperature is still low. Gradually increase the temperature and continue frying till crispy.

3. For sauce, in a saucepan heat [A] till thickened and bubbly. Remove from heat, drizzle over hot Satsuma-imo, and toss to coat.

4. Sprinkle with black sesame seeds and stir gently before serving.

KABOCHA *(Japanese Pumpkin)*



Did you know there was once a custom in Japan based on the saying that “eating kabocha with shiruko (sweet soup made from azuki beans) on the winter solstice will prevent common colds?” Not many people would know about such a thing these days. Around the winter solstice—the time of the longest night of the year—Japanese people used to eat kabocha, which has high nutritional value and can be stored for lengthy periods, in combination with azuki beans. They wanted to maximize their intake of vitamins, minerals and dietary fiber in order to strengthen the mucous membranes and skin resistance, and thus prevent colds during the winter. It was wisdom developed over generations of Japanese people.

Kabocha originated on the American continental mass. Christopher Columbus found it and took it back to Europe along with tobacco, potatoes and tomatoes. After that, the vegetable traveled around the globe and was brought to Japan from Cambodia on Portuguese ships in 1541, during the Azuchi-Momoyama period. Subsequently it became known as kabocha. That type of kabocha was the one we now call Nihon kabocha. It has a knobby-looking skin and is a variety to which the Japanese people are well accustomed. Today, many of the kabocha in the market are of the type called Kuri kabocha, which was created based on the Seiyo kabocha (buttercup squash) brought from America to Japan during the late Edo period. It’s popular for its strong yet sweet flavor and

A Flavor of the Earth

moist, fluffy texture, which is like chestnuts. It’s found in the market under such brand names as “Miyako,” “Ebisu,” “Kurokawa,” “Akazukin,” etc. The kabocha we eat in the U.S. is this same Kuri kabocha, which was originally cultivated with seeds brought back from Japan. Blessed with the climate of its originating country, this kabocha is wonderfully delicious.

When kabocha is just harvested, it is still growing. So, unlike other vegetables and fruits, freshness isn’t as important. It should be fully matured first, in order to become flavorful. First, kabocha is ripened in a warm place (77°F for 13 days, during which some of the starch converts to carbohydrate. Then it’s transferred to a cool place (50°F and stored for about a month in order to increase its carbohydrate content. In this way the just-harvested, dry, bland-tasting kabocha is transformed into smooth, sweet kabocha. Fully ripened, succulent kabocha has a reddish-yellow flesh and a hard skin with a dry, corky stem, and is heavier than it looks. It reaches the peak of ripeness about one-and-a-half to three months after it’s harvested.

Kabocha, a deep-yellow vegetable, is a typical example of health food products. It contains a balanced combination of dietary fiber, protein, beta-carotene, vitamins A, B1, B2 and C, calcium, kalium and iron. When beta-carotene is digested, a sufficient amount of it becomes vitamin A1, which is effective against blood and heart diseases as well as other modern diseases. Carotene and kalium help increase the secretion of insulin from the pancreas, which in turn helps control diabetes. Carotene and vitamin C have antioxidant properties, which eliminate radical oxygen, thus preventing the development of cancer cells. Kabocha’s abundant dietary fiber stabilizes the digestive system, preventing constipation and all kinds of blood

diseases. It can also be of benefit in dieting and weight loss. Moreover, kabocha seeds contain large quantities of zinc, which enhances taste function and sperm production. Kabocha is loaded with plant nutrients, so it’s even referred to as a natural remedy. Now, kabocha is used not just in various dishes but also as an excellent cake ingredient. A kabocha boom is quietly taking place.

As with the fact that there are all kinds of nutrients in kabocha, there are all kinds of dishes that make use of kabocha. Any recipe calling for kabocha will be delicious, such as kabocha rice, daigaku kabocha (candied kabocha), kabocha korokke (croquette), kabocha tempura, simmered kabocha, kabocha soup, kabocha salad, kabocha pickles, kabocha karinto (sweet deep-fried kabocha), kabocha pie, and kabocha gnocchi. In famous cake shops throughout Japan, kabocha Mont Blanc, kabocha pudding and kabocha ice cream are very popular.

It’s truly a gift from Mother Earth. When you look at the price, it may be “only a kabocha.” However, if you look at its deliciousness and nutritional value, you may want to say, “Hurray for kabocha!”

*“Sweet and Delicious!”
Hugely Popular Nijiya
Kabocha on Sale Now*



The top three recipes using kabocha

How to Cut Kabocha: For easier cutting, microwave the whole kabocha for five minutes.



Daigaku Kabocha (Candied Japanese Pumpkin)

■ **INGREDIENTS** (serves 2)
8.9 oz kabocha (about one quarter)
Cooking oil for deep-frying
Black sesame seeds as garnish
[Seasoning]
6 tablespoons sugar
1 teaspoon soy sauce
2 teaspoons vinegar
6 tablespoons water

DIRECTIONS:

1. Using a deep fryer, immerse the kabocha in oil and fry till crispy and golden. Cool slightly.
2. Place the kabocha back in the oil and fry for another 10 seconds. Drain off the excess oil.
3. In a saucepan, heat the seasoning to a boil. Add the fried kabocha and simmer till no liquid remains in the saucepan.
4. Sprinkle with black sesame seeds before serving.



Kabocha Salad

■ **INGREDIENTS** (serves 2)
8.9 oz kabocha (about one quarter)
2 slices bacon
0.7 oz sliced almonds
Sliced onions as garnish (optional)
Dressing:
2 tablespoons mayonnaise
1/2 teaspoon curry powder
Salt and pepper to taste

DIRECTIONS:

1. Roughly peel the kabocha, cut into bite-sized pieces, and microwave.
2. Combine all the ingredients for the dressing. Toast the sliced almonds in a skillet.
3. Cut the bacon into slices 0.5" wide, and cook in a skillet.
4. Roughly mash the cooked kabocha, then add the bacon and sliced almonds. Stir in the dressing.
5. If desired, sprinkle with the sliced onions before serving.



Kabocha Pudding

■ **INGREDIENTS**
(serves 2 to 3)
8.9 oz kabocha (about one quarter)
3 eggs
10 oz milk (For richer flavor, replace 1.7 oz with whipping cream.)
5 tablespoons sugar
1 tablespoon butter
Cinnamon (optional)

Caramel Sauce:

5 tablespoons sugar
2 tablespoons water

DIRECTIONS:

1. For caramel sauce, in a small saucepan heat sugar and water till bubbly and golden brown; remove from heat and add 1 tablespoon water. Pour into custard cups lightly greased with butter (not included in the above ingredients).
2. Remove the skin and seeds from the kabocha and cut into bite-sized pieces, then plunge into water. Cover with plastic wrap and microwave for six to seven minutes or till tender.
3. Mash the hot kabocha and add sugar and butter; strain. Add eggs and milk; strain again. Once the kabocha mixture becomes smooth in texture, pour into prepared custard cups.
4. For steamed pudding: In a saucepan boil 1" of water. Place custard cups filled with kabocha mixture and cover with a clean dishcloth. Cook on high heat for 30 seconds, then simmer on low heat for about 20 minutes. If desired, sprinkle with cinnamon before serving. For baked pudding: Pour lukewarm water into a shallow baking pan. Place custard cups filled with kabocha mixture in the baking pan, and bake at 350°F for 30 minutes or till a wooden toothpick inserted near the center comes out clean. If desired, sprinkle with cinnamon before serving.



SOY SAUCE

The taste of soy sauce is one of the most familiar to the Japanese. Originating in ancient China, soy sauce was further developed in Japan and is now used in hotels, restaurants and households all around the world. It is spreading throughout the globe as an all-purpose seasoning, so it's a source of pride for Japan. Today, many kinds of soy sauces are available, and their flavors vary depending on which manufacturing method and ingredients are used. Here we introduce various types of soy sauces and their effective usages, along with the history of soy sauce.



HISTORY

ORIGIN OF SOY SAUCE

Soy sauce is a liquid seasoning developed in Japan. However, its roots go back to Hishio, in China. Soy sauce originated as an ancient technique for food preservation that used salt. It was discovered that when food was preserved in salt, it would ferment and mature over time, and that it would become more savory. Various forms of Hishio were introduced into Japan in the early sixth century A.D., such as kusabishio (from herbs), uobishio (from fish) and kokubishio (from grain). Among these basic forms, kokubishio was further refined in Japan. Back then, however, kokubishio was made only from soybeans, whereas today's soy sauce is made from a combination of soybeans and wheat.

GLOBALIZATION OF SOY SAUCE

The globalization of soy sauce can be traced back to the Edo period. During that time, Japanese soy sauce was exported from Nagasaki, which was the only port open to foreign trade. Most soy sauce was shipped to China, Southeast Asia, India and Sri Lanka, but some made it to the Netherlands in northern Europe, where soy sauce was highly prized as a precious seasoning of the Far East.

Japanese soy sauce was greatly valued, and legend even has it that Japanese soy sauce was used as a secret ingredient in the royal cuisine served at the table of King Louis XIV of France.

Over the centuries, Japanese soy sauce has become popular in more than 100 countries worldwide. The reason soy

sauce is so strongly associated with the lives of the Japanese, and the reason it has prevailed throughout the world, must lie in its delicious flavor.

TYPES

HOW TO MAKE SOY SAUCE

There are several manufacturing methods for soy sauce, including soy sauce made by regular "fermenting method", soy sauce made by "mixed and semi-fermenting method" and soy sauce made by "mixed method." Eighty percent of Japanese soy sauce is "soy sauce made by regular fermenting method". While the soy sauce made by mixed and semi-fermenting method and the soy sauce made by mixed methods use ingredients that are broken down and fermented through chemical means, the soy sauce made by regular fermenting method uses microorganisms such as koji mold (*Aspergillus oryzae*) and yeast to create a natural fermentation over a long period of time.

The main ingredients of soy sauce are soybeans, defatted soybeans, wheat and salt. Defatted soybeans have had their oil content removed. Soy sauce is produced through the slow, natural fermentation of koji-mold culture with salt water added. The koji-mold culture is made by mixing the koji mold into the heated ingredients (soybeans and wheat), whereupon the mixture is incubated for a few days. The length of brewing varies depending on the intended type of soy sauce. It can range from several weeks to six months, but some types take even longer.

TYPES OF SOY SAUCES

The Japanese Agricultural Standards (JAS) divide Japanese soy sauce into the following five categories: koikuchi (dark soy sauce), usukuchi (light-colored soy sauce), tamari (less wheat), saishikomi (twice-fermented soy sauce) and shiro (clear soy sauce).

[Koikuchi (Regular soy sauce)]

Koikuchi is the most popular soy sauce in Japan, accounting for a major share of the country's domestic soy sauce production. It is made from nearly equal quantities of soybeans and wheat, and has been perfected mainly in the Kanto region since the Edo period. It is characterized by its fine balance of aroma, color and taste, and can be used not just alone as a table condiment but also as a cook's seasoning for simmered dishes, broiled dishes, soup stock, basting sauce, etc.

[Usukuchi (Light colored soy sauce)]

The word usukuchi (light) indicates its color, not its salt content. In fact, it has slightly higher salt content than koikuchi does.

Usukuchi can be used to highlight the natural flavor and appearance of ingredients in the preparation of fish dishes, vegetable dishes, etc. It's characterized by a light color and an aroma that is relatively less intense. Usukuchi isn't suitable for use alone as a dipping sauce or a table condiment, but it's excellent for use in simmered vegetable dishes, clear soups and udon noodle soups.

THE STORY OF NORI

**ABUNDANCE IN VITAMINS AND MINERALS.
EAT "THE SEA VEGETABLE" EVERYDAY FOR YOUR HEALTH!**

The Japanese food scene in the United States has been changing dramatically these days. In fact, it was not long ago that "nori" was disliked by many non-Japanese because of its appearance (a black paper like sheet!) and somewhat fishy flavor. But as sushi has gained popularity, its companion "nori" has also naturally become popular, although it is still called "sea weed".

Now in some places, it is promoted as "sea vegetable" and is almost becoming an English word along with "sushi", "tofu" and "sake". Sushi rolls using "nori" is now available almost at any major super market deli.

Nori also seems to have attracted people with its "Nutrition Facts". Non-fat, and low in calories, it is an alkaline food that contains plenty of dietary fiber, good protein, chlorophyll and various vitamins and minerals. It also has betaine and taurine which helps reduce cholesterol. What other foods can you find healthier than this?

Nori has been indispensable food for Japanese for a long time.

It is said that Japanese people were already eating "nori" in the 7th century. They began cultivating it some time in the Edo period (1603-1867). The main nori farm in that era was Edo Bay (present Tokyo Bay). The nori raised there was called "Asakusa Nori" because it was collected at the mouth of Asakusa River. Both production and sales of

Asakusa Nori was completely controlled by the regime.

As the production increased, the farming area expanded. As Tokyo became modernized, the farming area spread farther out of Tokyo. Currently Ariake Bay in Kyushu is said to produce the highest quality nori.

At present, 10 billion nori sheets are produced and consumed a year in Japan. Nori is one of the essentials in Japanese food. From simple rice and nori breakfast to sushi to soba noodles, it is no exaggeration that Japanese can not live without it. Therefore, both demand and supply have kept increasing each year even though the Japanese diet has become westernized.

Japan is not the biggest producer of nori in the world. China is. However because Japan restricts the importation of nori to protect domestic producers, the major part of China's production goes to the States. As a result, American nori lovers enjoy high quality nori at significantly lower prices compared to the Japanese.

Now how can we determine the quality of nori?

Good nori should be even, aromatic, shiny and almost black deep green in color. But you may find a wide range of prices among similar looking nori sheets on the shelf. For example, the same size 10 sheet package on the bottom is \$1 per pack and the top is \$6 "produced in Japan" pack.

Nori's grade and price are determined by the production site, species, harvested season, texture, aroma, gloss, shape, flatness, coloring through the light, coloring after roasting, crispness and dissolving sensation in the mouth. The most expensive nori is Ariake produced. The cheapest is produced in China. The difference between these two is apparent; however, it is not easy to tell the difference between a \$2 and \$3 nori.

To learn how to choose good quality nori, there is nothing that takes the place of experience. Let's start with less expensive nori. Once you learn to distinguish the difference, try higher grades. While you are testing, you will gain good calcium, various vitamins and minerals, all of which may help ease stress and calm your nerves.

Nori is largely categorized into two types. "Crispy" and "Tasty and tough." The "Crispy" nori has a soft texture and grows in quiet waters such as Ariake Bay. This popular nori is crispy, as described, and aromatic, good for dishes that should be eaten soon after served, like rolls at the sushi bar, hand rolls or simply with plain warm rice.

The "tasty and tough" nori is thicker, darker and tougher because it grows in a rather rough sea like Seto Sea. Since its real taste emerges after it softens, it should be used for something you eat later, such as the sushi rolls or rice balls for lunch. Don't use the "tasty and tough" nori in place of the

Easy to make, and absolutely delicious! How to make fresh tofu

Soybeans are rich in nutrients for maintaining your health, including isoflavone, saponin and lecithin.

Soybeans are believed to prevent all kinds of modern ailments and adult diseases. They lower the blood cholesterol level and limit the formation of the lipid prooxide, thus preventing blood clots and hardening of the arteries. They also improve intestinal health by preventing indigestion, constipation and the resultant skin problems. What's more, the antioxidants in soybeans can suppress cancer development and inhibit calcium efflux, thus helping prevent heart disease, osteoporosis and menopausal symptoms.

You can have a perfectly balanced meal by eating soybeans to seafood, grains and fresh vegetables containing unsaturated fat. As you may know, soybeans have been a staple food for many of the Japanese people who are over 100 years old today.

By acquiring a few techniques, you can make unbelievably delicious tofu in your own home. All you'll need is Nijiya Soy Milk (original), which is made of organic soybeans, and Natural Nigari (bitter) liquid.

Homemade tofu has exceptional flavor, so it's perfect for your guests. So, why not give it a try?



Currently on sale at Nijiya Market, in response to high demand!

Nijiya Soy Milk, which is rich in the nutrients and natural flavor of organic soybeans, and Natural Nigari liquid.

Let's make
homemade tofu!

You can make incredibly delicious tofu and yuba (bean curd skin) using Nijiya Soy Milk (original), made of organic soybeans, and Natural Nigari.

You might find it a bit hard at first, but once you get the hang of it, it will be easy. We're certain you'll be hooked on this new taste sensation!



* The point to remember when making tofu or yuba is that soy milk must never boil. Also, if you want to savor the delicate flavor of tofu, we suggest eating the tofu as an appetizer using less seasoning.

* Cooking time varies according to the type of microwave you use. Consider the cooking time directed in the recipe only as a guide. A secret to successful tofu/yuba making is to set the timer for less than directed at first, and then extend the cooking time little by little as you check for doneness.

Ingredients for momen-dofu (firm tofu)



INGREDIENTS (2 Servings):

30 oz Nijiya Soy Milk (original) / 3 to 4 teaspoons Natural Nigari liquid

DIRECTIONS:

1. In a saucepan, heat soymilk over low heat till it reaches a temperature of 175°F.
2. Remove from heat and add nigari, stirring lightly with a spoon. (The soymilk will start to coagulate.)
3. Line a strainer with cotton cloth (or paper towel) and pour in the soymilk mixture. Let the extra liquid drain.
4. Carefully remove the cloth from the strainer and take out the coagulated tofu. Serve with the desired condiment and/or sauce.

[Tamari]

Unlike koikuchi, which is made with roughly equal amounts of soybeans and wheat, tamari is made primarily from soybeans. It's popular in the Chubu region, especially in Aichi Prefecture. Along with the typical use as a sashimi dipping sauce, tamari is also used as coating sauce when baking arare and senbei rice crackers, because it turns a beautiful reddish color when heated.

[Saishikomi (Refermented soy sauce)]

The word saishikomi (meaning "twice fermented") is derived from a production process in which the soy sauce is actually fermented twice.

Generally, this type has a dark color, a thick texture and a rich flavor. But because saishikomi is expensive, it's used mostly as a table condiment, particularly as a dipping sauce for sashimi and sushi. In the production process of regular soy sauce, salt water is added to koji-mold culture. However, in the case of saishikomi, soy sauce is used instead of salt water.

[Shiro (Extra light-colored soy sauce)]

In contrast to tamari, shiro primarily uses roasted wheat and only a small amount of steamed soybeans. Its color is even lighter than usukuchi, and its flavor and richness are more subdued. Shiro is used to highlight the appearance of foods, and is used as an addition to soup stock for udon noodles and others.

You can also find the following types of soy sauces in the marketplace:

[Marudaizu (whole soybeans)]

The soy sauce labeled marudaizu isn't made with defatted soybeans but with whole soybeans, including their oil content. While soy sauce made with defatted soybeans has a sharp, vivid flavor, Marudaizu has a deep, mellow flavor.

[Yuuki (organic soy sauce)]

Yuuki soy sauce uses organic agricul-

tural products (soybeans and wheat) as its primary ingredients and is produced through a process that's completely separate from the one using non-organic products.

[Gen-en (sodium-reduced)]

Gen-en soy sauce contains less than 50 percent the sodium of regular soy sauce. In the U.S., this type of soy sauce is designated "Lite" or as "low sodium."

HOW TO CHOOSE THE RIGHT SOY SAUCE

With its harmony of color, taste and aroma, soy sauce brings out the deeper, more complex flavor of food. So, it greatly affects your cooking results, depending on how you use it. When using soy sauce in cooking, it's essential that you choose properly between koikuchi and usukuchi. It's important to select the soy sauce that will enhance the natural flavors of your cooking ingredients.

Koikuchi

Because of its fine balance of color,

taste and aroma, koikuchi is a versatile seasoning that can go with just about any ingredient or dish. It lends itself particularly well to teriyaki, nitsuke (simmered dishes) and fish dishes using red fish (bonito, yellowtail, etc.) and blue fish (mackerel, etc.).

Usukuchi

Usukuchi is characterized by its light color and subdued aroma, and is used to enhance the natural colors of ingredients in cooking.

Usukuchi is particularly recommended for simmered vegetable dishes. It helps retain the color of white root vegetables (taro, lotus root, etc.) and green vegetables. Additionally, usukuchi is an excellent choice if you need to season dishes without adding any color to them, as is the case with chawan-mushi (egg custard) and clear soup.

For more information, please visit the Kikkoman website: <http://www.kikkoman.com/>

HOW TO ENHANCE THE FLAVOR OF FOOD USING SOY SAUCE

Soy sauce has an amazing ability to enhance the flavor of food and make it more delicious, and can increase the variety of the dishes you prepare. In addition to Japanese food, soy sauce can be used for a variety of dishes as a hidden flavor. It can provide various effects, such as by enhancing the natural flavor of food and incorporating the tastes of different ingredients. Here are some of the ideas you can try in your daily cooking. No doubt you'll be able to find delicious new combinations.

- 1. A final touch for stir-fried dishes**
(The flavor will be enriched, making the dish more savory and delicious.)
- 2. A secret ingredient for curries and stews**
(Adding one teaspoon of soy sauce as a final touch will bring out a richer, deeper flavor.)
- 3. A fine combination with Italian dishes**
(A delicious salad dressing can be made just by combining proper amounts of balsamic vinegar, olive oil and soy sauce.)
- 4. A perfect match with dairy products**
(In addition to butter, soy sauce is also a great complement to sour cream and cream cheese.)
- 5. Great for dipping sauce**
(Adding a small amount of soy sauce to salsa and guacamole will enhance the natural flavor of the ingredients.)

“crispy” nori, otherwise you will very likely end up wrestling to bite off a tasteless hand roll.

Although these two types are so different, there is no particular description or warning on the package. You have to figure it out by yourself. So if you are not sure, buy a few different brands and taste them to compare. You will find the difference quite easily.

The other key to maximize the taste of nori is to eat as quickly as possible after opening the package. Thanks to the modern technology of desiccant and packaging, the nori in a package hardly deteriorates as it used to. Nori is no

longer a tea seasonable food, but is available year round. It is fresh at the time of the harvest, and will stay fresh for a long time. However, once it is exposed to the air and especially to moisture, oxidation quickly takes place. The original flavor and taste will be lost and never be restored. Use your open Nori right away. Do not lament over old leftovers. If you really want to save some leftover nori, double pack it



in air tight plastic bags and store it in the freezer.

Quick and Easy Recipes with Nori

ROASTED NORI SOUP



INGREDIENTS (SERVING 4): 2~3 sheets nori, 1/2 onion, 2 strips bacon, 3 TB corn kernels, 5C water, 2T chicken soup granule or consomme granule, sesame oil, salt, pepper and soy sauce to taste, green onion for garnish

1. Thinly slice the onion and bacon.
2. Boil the water in a sauce pan and resolve the soup granule. Add onion and bacon and cook for a while. Add corn kernels and finely torn nori pieces.
3. Adjust the taste with salt, pepper, and soy sauce. Add a small amount of sesame oil for flavor and garnish it with finely chopped green onion.

LETTUCE AND NORI SALAD



INGREDIENTS (SERVING 4): 2~3 sheets of yakinori, 1 head of lettuce, and sesame oil and soy sauce for taste.

1. Rinse the lettuce. Dry well and tear it into bite size pieces.
2. Put the lettuce in a salad bowl and sprinkle the torn nori pieces over.
3. Pour sesame oil over then soy sauce. (It is critical to pour sesame oil first, otherwise it will be too salty.)
4. Before serving add a small amount of vegetable oil and toss it well.

POTATO AND NORI TEMPURA



INGREDIENTS (SERVING 4): 2 sheets of yakinori, 4~5 large potatoes, salt, oil for frying

1. Peel and grade the potatoes. Squeeze the water out of the potatoes. (A coffee filter works well for this process)
2. Cut the nori sheet into 6 rectangular shapes.
3. Spread the graded potato onto the nori sheets. About 1/8" thickness.
4. Deep fry the potato and nori sheets for crispy golden brown. Serve warm with salt.

SPINACH AND NORI BUTTER SAUTE



INGREDIENTS (SERVING 2): 3~4 nori sheets (torn into pieces), 1 bunch spinach, butter for sauteing, soy sauce, salt and pepper for taste

1. Clean the spinach (organic is recommended). Cut out the root and cut into bite -size, about 1" long.
2. In a sauté pan, melt enough butter and saute the spinach quickly with high heat.
3. Add torn nori pieces at one time and cook a little more. Add small amount of say sauce from the side of the pan and adjust the taste with salt and pepper.

Fresh! Healthy! Beautiful! Creative Sushi

All the staff members at Nijiya's Sushi Department were gathered together in one place, ready for the challenge of creating original sushi. It was a sushi contest to decide who would become our very own "Iron Sushi Chef." The contestants would compete through the creativity, taste and visual appeal of their creations, for which they were given one hour to prepare. They are all skilled at making delicious sushi because that is what they do every day. Winners were determined on the basis of the combination of ingredients, creativity and sense of presentation.

The amount of sushi each contestant makes every day is ten times more than chefs in sushi bars and restaurants make. Not surprisingly, it was fun to see them display their impressive skills. One by one, unique sushi were created and displayed in a row. Some contestants used uncommon ingredients to ensure originality. There was a contestant who had prepared pictures of his designs in order to work on his creation. All the vegetables used in this contest were organic, in consideration of those who would be eating.

Here we introduce five of the most outstanding sushi creations from the contest. We'll gladly accept orders for these, so please contact any Nijiya Market for details.



1. Takuan rolls with ume and yamaimo (pickled daikon radish rolls with Japanese plum and mountain yam) 2. Cucumber rolls with ooba leaf and salmon roe 3. Bountiful seafood rolls 4. White takuan sushi 5. White tuna sushi 6. Fatty tuna gunkanmaki (battleship roll) - Ume flavor 7. Avocado sushi 8. Gunkanmaki with raw ham 9. Squid sushi with raw sea urchin 10. Oyako gunkanmaki (salmon and salmon roe) 11. Asari gunkanmaki (short-necked clams) 12. Spicy rolls with tsubomina greens

HANA (flower) BONSAI SUSHI

This gorgeous creation is full of originality. It was created by a female chef, whose careful attention to detail complements the beauty of this dish.



CALIFORNIA HANAFUBUKI (flower storm)

The flower motifs made with gari (sweet pickled ginger) are unique creations. The dish is beautifully finished to resemble a "flower storm."



HANAZAKARI ENKAI (flower blossom party) SUSHI

New sushi combinations using ethnic ingredients. The dish is full of fun, like a festival.



HEALTHY SHOKUSAI (colorful ingredients) SUSHI

Healthy combinations with abundant seasonal vegetables direct from a Nijiya Organic Farm.



RAINBOW MIDARE HANA (wildly arranged flowers)

A colorful creation using rich ingredients. The workmanship of its high-level rainbow rolls is outstanding.

Sea Food in Season **TUNA**



Tuna Crispy Salad

■ INGREDIENTS (serving 4)

5.2oz (150g) tuna sashimi block, 1 celery stalk, 1/2 Carrot, 1/2 Tokyo negi (green onion), 1 pack kaiware sprouts, crushed peanuts for garnishing

DRESSING:

3 TB soy sauce, 2 TB sake, 2TB sesame oil, 3 TB vegetable oil, 2 TB lemon juice, 1 TB grated ginger

1. Wrap the tuna sashimi block in a piece of gauze and place in a strainer. Pour boiling water over the tuna. As soon as the color of surface changes, cool the tuna in ice water.
2. Julienne celery and carrot in about 1 1/2" length. Julienne only white part of Tokyo negi (large green onion) hair thin and leave it in cold water for crispness.
3. Cut won ton skin into about 1/3" strips and deep fry them to golden.
4. Slice the tuna and place them onto a plate. Heap the well dried vegetables top on the tuna.
5. Garnish with fried won ton skins and crashed peanuts. Drizzle the dressing before serving.

Japanese food has gained popularity in not only the States but almost all over the world. Eating raw fish is quite a unique custom. Even so sushi and sashimi have been successfully adopted in many countries. The more these raw fish dishes become popular, the more people also have become aware that raw fish is a healthy and luxurious choice of food.

Among the raw fish, "tuna" is undoubtedly the No. 1 choice in both Japan and the States. In its consumption, no other country can beat Japan. Overwhelming 55% of the world's tuna lands in Japan. The US comes next. The US not only consumes but catches tuna and exports to the world's largest market, Japan. At the same time, the US imports fresh tuna by air from other countries, too.

The quality of tuna is different from

species to species. But handling skills after being caught and shipping technologies play a big role in quality, too. When tuna is caught, it must be gutted and refrigerated as quickly as possible. Then it is packed in a box with ice for air shipping. Tuna's characteristic red flesh is so delicate that its bright color would go dull in a minute if the storing temperature exceeds 5°C or if it is exposed to the air. Therefore, no matter how big it is, tuna has to be shipped in whole if intended to be used raw.

Tunas are huge fish. We never see a whole tuna lying in a glass case at a store. Tuna is sold as beef is sold in portion. These portions also have names like, "akami", "chutoro", or "nakauchi" like beef, "sirloin", "fillet", "rib", depending on the part of body. Each part has a different taste, a different use and of course,

a different price.

Tunas live in the open seas such as Pacific, Atlantic and Indian Oceans. They reach the adult size in three years and keep growing larger. Their beautiful streamline makes them fast and strong swimmers. It is said that tunas can swim over 100 km per hour and could cross a vast ocean. Like other fish, tunas intake the oxygen through the gills. Once they stop swimming the oxygen can not come into their system. Thus tunas must keep swimming day and night their entire life.

The followings are characteristics of three main types of tuna:

"Black Tuna" (Hon Maguro)

These are the king of the tunas. The largest, fattiest and finest ones are probably seen only at some high end Japanese



Tuna Zuke Don

■ INGREDIENTS (serving 4)

1C rice, 1TB sake, 1 piece (about 5cm long) dashi konbu, 7oz (200g) tuna sashimi block, 1 large sheet of yakinori (see weed), ginger sliced needle thin for garnish, wasabi (optional)

Vinegar mixture: 1/2C rice vinegar, 3TB sugar, 2T salt

Marinade: 3TB soy sauce, 1TB dashi (fish broth)

1. Wash rice and soak it in water for 30min. Add sake and konbu to the rice and cook normally. Leave it with the lid on for 10 min after cooked, then transfer the rice to the mixing bowl.
2. Boil the vinegar mixture quickly and cooled. Pour it over rice and mix. Be careful not to knead the rice.
3. Pour boiling water over tuna. As soon as the color changes, cool it in ice water.
4. Marinade the tuna block for 2~3 hours. Turn it a couple times in the marinade.
5. Mix thinly cut yakinori with rice and put it into four individual bowls. Slice tuna about 1/8" width and place them onto the rice. Drizzle remained marinade mixture and garnish with thinly sliced ginger.

restaurants. Fishing grounds for these fish are the North Atlantic, Pacific and Indian Oceans and Mediterranean Sea. Because of their size (over 880 lbs) and quality, even some portions could cost a fortune. Undoubtedly it is a Japanese delicacy. But black tunas found at the world famous Tokyo Tsukiji Fish Market are often imported from the States. That means the black tuna offered in the States must be as good as the one offered at high end restaurants in Japan.

Speaking of price, the most expensive tuna is called "shibi" or "blue fin tuna" in English due to its blue fins. It is 2 year old, 16" to 39" long juvenile tuna that is caught mostly near Japan. Its taste is often described as "melting".

"Big Eye Tuna" (Mebach Maguro)

The name tells you how they look.

They have big eyes. 78" long and 330 lbs, they are considered as a smaller version of black tuna. These beautiful red flesh, pleasant texture and firmness make perfect sushi and sashimi. Even though it is more expensive and the taste of the fatty part, ("toro") of a big eye tuna is not as appealing as that of black tuna, its appearance surely wins it over. South Pacific countries and Ecuador are the main exporters to Japan.

"Yellow Fin Tuna" (Kihada Maguro)

"Yellow Fin Tuna" got its name because its fins turn golden yellow when it gets excited. This is the most distributed tuna in the States. Although it does not have a fatty "toro" part, it does have a wonderfully light and "unforgettable" taste. You can enjoy the taste of raw yellow fin tuna in the States, which is not available in Japan, with a reasonable price

■ INGREDIENTS (serving 2)

5.2oz (150g) tuna sashimi block, Tokyo negi for garnish, 2~4 leaves of basil for garnish

Red wine reduction sauce: 1C red wine, 1/2 onion finely chopped, 1 clove garlic finely chopped, paprika, salt, pepper to taste, olive oil

1. Slice only white part of Tokyo negi as thin as hair and leave it in ice water for crispness.
2. Make sauce. Cook onion and garlic in olive oil till the onion becomes translucent. Add red wine and cook to reduce the volume to 1/4 of original volume. Add salt, pepper and paprika for taste.
3. Cut the tuna for steak, about 1/2" thickness. Saute the tuna in the pan with a little bit of olive oil. Adjust the doneness.
4. Garnish the steak with basils and Tokyo negi. Serve with the red wine sauce.

Tuna Steak



thanks to the large volume caught in the vast fishing grounds of Hawaii, Miami, Gulf of Mexico, Pacific coast and off shore of Baja California.

Now we know what types of tuna are available. But how can we choose good tuna? First, think which you prefer, rich or light taste. Naturally, tuna in cold water or caught in winter is fattier. On the contrary, tuna in warmer water is low in fat, offers a lighter taste and bright red colored flesh.

Next, simply pick one that looks good. Choose dense and rich looking tuna. Color may be important, although it has nothing to do with the taste. Bright red tuna may be more suitable for sashimi for the color is more appetizing. After all, regardless which you choose, please eat it on the day of purchase.

SOBA *(Buckwheat Noodles)*



HISTORY OF SOBA

Originally, soba was eaten in a form of sobagaki (a dumpling made of soba flour kneaded with boiling water). Until then, the majority of people had enjoyed eating udon noodles, and soba had been viewed only as secondary compared to udon. However, as soba restaurants emerged and spread across the city of Edo (now known as Tokyo), the situation was reversed and soba became more dominant in the market. Back then soba was sold under the name Ni-hachi (two-eight) soba. There are two theories about the origin of this name: One is that soba was made of 80 percent soba flour and 20 percent wheat flour; and another is that the price of one bowl of soba was 16 mon (2 x 8).

TYPES OF SOBA

When the soba seed (buckwheat seed) is milled, the center of the endosperm is first milled into flour, so its outer seed coat and embryo are likely to be the last to be milled. For that reason the flour made in the initial stage of milling consists mostly of the inner portions of the soba seed, whereas the flour made in the last stage of milling consists more of the outer layers of the soba seed. According to the milling stage, soba flour is generally divided into the first-milling flour, second-milling flour and third-milling flour. Soba can be categorized into the following three types, based on which flour is used:

- Sarashina soba: Made primarily from the first-milling flour, with a white appearance. It has a firm, chewy texture.
- Yabu soba: Made from both the first-milling flour and the second-milling flour. It has a well-balanced color and flavor.
- Inaka soba: Made from all the three flour types. The noodles are thick, dark and rough in texture. It has a strong aroma and natural soba flavor.

Soba is also cultivated outside Japan. It is

widely produced in China, Canada and the U.S. state of South Dakota. Soba is harvested in the fall, and the soba flour is exported in vacuum-sealed packages to maintain that just-ground freshness. Japanese soba is considered outstanding in terms of flavor and appearance, but the qualities of foreign soba noodles have also been improving in recent years due to the advancement of transportation systems and storage methods.

NUTRITIONAL VALUE

Soba is a simple health food that's highly nutritious but low in calories. Its protein content is twice that of white rice and 1.5 times as much as wheat flour. It's also packed with three to four times more B-complex vitamins than white rice and wheat flour. Soba contains choline, which protects the liver, and rutin, which is effective in preventing brain hemorrhage. It's also a good source of dietary fiber. In addition to regulating bowel movement, dietary fiber binds to cholesterol, thus preventing it from being absorbed in the body. It also slows the absorption of glucose, thus regulating the blood glucose level. Soba can play a role in preventing many adult diseases, including the hardening of the arteries, obesity and diabetes.

HOW TO EAT SOBA

It is said that soba should be enjoyed in the throat. If you want to enjoy the flavor of soba itself, zarusoba is the best choice. Pick up a small amount of soba noodles with your chopsticks and dip it only halfway into a soy sauce-based tsuyu. Then, slurp it all up while simultaneously drawing air into your mouth, and, without chewing much, let it slide down into your throat. You can enjoy the soba's aroma, the feeling of the soba's texture and the flavor of the tsuyu sauce all together when the noodles pass down into your throat. Since soba is an alkaline food, it goes per-

fectly with such foods as duck meat, itawasa (sliced fish cake with wasabi soy sauce), atsuyaki (Japanese-style egg omelets) and Japanese sake.

Soba has been a part of many quaint scenes and customs in Japanese people's lives since the Edo period, as represented by soba restaurants, soba deliveries, Ni-hachi soba, eating soba with sake, eating soba after drinking sake, etc. In the world of rakugo (Japanese comic monologue), performers slurp up soba noodles with air, making exaggerated slurping sounds. This is certainly a good way to enjoy soba, but when you're with someone who isn't Japanese, please tone down the slurping sound.

Soba is called "buckwheat" in English, and is known all around the world. Soba is widely used in pancakes and crepes in France, and in breads in Russia. For Americans, soba hasn't yet become so prevalent, so for a start it's important that Japanese people enjoy soba and convey their love of this food throughout their Japanese communities. Then, soba will naturally spread among Americans as well. Soba is one of the ultimate Japanese dishes. Just like sushi, I hope the word "soba" will someday become prevalent in the U.S.

The Japanese have a unique tradition of having Soba dishes for dinner or even after dinner on the New Year's Eve. It is often said in Japanese that a good life is "living thin and long", rather than "living large but short." Because Soba is, well, "thin" and "long", it is the perfect dish to represent this idea of a long lived life. So for this year, I think it is a wonderful idea to add a few tasty Soba noodle dishes for your New Year's Countdown party!