

RIKA'S  
MODERN  
JAPANESE  
HOME  
COOKING

Simplifying Authentic Recipes

RIKA  
YUKIMASA

RIZZOLI  
NEW YORK



# BROCCOLI SALAD WITH GOMAAE DRESSING

My mother used to say, “Eating sesame seeds is like using a good moisturizer.” My sister and I still eat a lot of sesame seeds for our skin. Gomaae sauce is slightly sweet and suits a variety of blanched vegetables—broccoli, spinach, carrots, bell peppers, okra, green beans, asparagus, cabbage, and bean sprouts. The key is to drain the blanched vegetables well so the salad isn’t watery. Traditionally, sesame seeds for gomaae are lightly crushed with a mortar and pestle, but if you don’t own a mortar and pestle, you can skip this step and your dressing will still be delicious. **SERVES 4**

**WINE RECOMMENDATION:** This dish calls for Tocai Friulano from the Friuli-Venezia-Giulia region.

**1 head broccoli, about 1 pound 4 ounces (570 grams)**

**¼ cup plus 1 tablespoon (45 grams) toasted sesame seeds**

**2 tablespoons (24 grams) sugar**

**2 tablespoons (30 milliliters) soy sauce**

Hold the head of the broccoli and peel the entire stalk. Slice the stalk into ¼-inch (6-millimeter) rounds. Cut the florets into bite-sized pieces.

Prepare a bowl of ice water and set aside.

Fill a medium saucepan with water and bring to a boil. Add the broccoli and cook for 2 minutes. With a slotted spoon or skimmer, transfer the broccoli to the ice water to stop them from cooking, and then drain well in a strainer.

To make the dressing, crush the toasted sesame seeds with a mortar and pestle. In a small bowl, combine the sugar and soy sauce and mix until the sugar is dissolved, then add the crushed seeds and mix well.

Place the broccoli florets in a medium bowl. Add the dressing and toss to combine thoroughly. Serve in small bowls.

**NOTE:** You can purchase toasted sesame seeds or toast them yourself. Toast sesame seeds in a dry skillet over medium heat for 3 to 5 minutes until fragrant and lightly browned. Or bake them in a 350°F (170°C) oven for 8 to 10 minutes. In either case, keep a close eye on the seeds and shake the pan or stir the seeds frequently—they can quickly go from pleasantly browned to burnt.



# STIR-FRIED MUSHROOMS WITH SOY SAUCE

Fresh mushrooms stir-fried in butter make an elegant starter for any dinner. There are many types of Japanese mushrooms. Shiitake, eryngii, shimeji, enokidake, matsutake, and maitake are just a few. The secret to a perfect stir-fry is to prepare everything beforehand. Ingredients, condiments, and the plates to serve the stir-fry must be ready before you start cooking. Also, make sure that everybody is seated at the table. Vegetable stir-fries get soggy quickly, so you must eat them immediately. These mushrooms start cooking in oil. The butter is added at the end to avoid burning. **SERVES 4**

**WINE RECOMMENDATION:** An elegant full-bodied white, such as an oaked Chardonnay, goes well with this dish.

## MUSHROOMS

**10 ounces (300 grams) button or other mushrooms**

**1 tablespoon (15 milliliters) extra-virgin olive oil or vegetable oil**

**2 tablespoons (28 grams) unsalted butter**

**¼ teaspoon (2 grams) kosher salt or sea salt**

**1 tablespoon (5 grams) sliced shiso leaves or basil leaves**

## SAUCE

**2 tablespoons (30 milliliters) cooking sake, dry vermouth, or medium sweet sherry**

**2 tablespoons (30 milliliters) soy sauce**

**1 teaspoon (5 grams) wasabi**

Start the mushrooms. Cut the mushrooms into bite-sized pieces. (If using shiitake mushrooms, remove the stems.)

Make the sauce. In a small bowl, mix the sake, soy sauce, and wasabi.

Heat the oil in a frying pan on high and add the mushrooms. Stir to coat them with the oil. When the mushrooms have browned, add the butter and toss just until the butter has melted to coat the mushrooms. Add the sauce and toss to coat. Season with salt.

Arrange in a large bowl or on a plate. Top with the sliced shiso or basil leaves and serve.



# PAN-FRIED TOFU WITH MASHED AVOCADO

Tofu's texture and flavor changes with the temperature. Cold, firm tofu will have a strong taste of soy, but when heated, it becomes creamier and nuttier. Cooking is a science. A little difference does matter. When I fry tofu in a pan, I use potato starch instead of flour. Unlike flour, potato starch does not have gluten. If you do not have potato starch, try using tapioca flour. The tofu will get crispy without burning. **SERVES 4**

**WINE RECOMMENDATION:** This dish goes well with Prosecco or any good sparkling wine.

**1 12-ounce (340-gram) block momen (medium-firm) tofu**

**½ avocado, pitted and peeled**

**1 teaspoon (5 grams) kosher salt or sea salt**

**½ teaspoon (2 grams) wasabi**

**Freshly squeezed juice of ½ lemon**

**⅓ cup (50 grams) potato starch or tapioca flour**

**¼ cup (60 milliliters) vegetable oil**

**4 umeboshi plum pickles, pitted and halved**

Wrap the tofu in a paper towel and place in a microwaveable container. Microwave for 3 minutes on high to get rid of excess water, then set aside to cool.

Make the sauce. In a bowl, mash the avocado with a fork. Mash in half of the salt, the wasabi, and the lemon juice.

Cut the tofu into eight slices and season with the remaining salt. Dredge the tofu in the potato starch and shake off any excess.

In a non-stick frying pan, heat the oil over medium heat. Place the tofu in the pan. Pan-fry the tofu until the bottom side is golden brown. Flip and cook the other side.

Arrange the tofu on individual plates and top each piece with some of the avocado sauce and half of an umeboshi plum pickle.

# GRILLED TOFU WITH MISO PASTE



Miso is, obviously, an ingredient in miso soup, but this flavorful paste is also a component in stir-fries, stews, and broiled dishes. Miso has a complex taste and offers a healthy dose of umami. Many people have a hard time placing the flavor when they first experience it, but they agree it tastes great. You can also slather this miso sauce on boiled vegetables, salmon, cod, shrimp, scallop, pork, or chicken and then broil them. This dish, known as dengaku, can be varied by mixing sesame seeds, tahini, or chopped almonds or pine nuts into the paste. If you don't have a microwave, press the tofu for 10 to 15 minutes to get rid of excess water. **SERVES 4**

**WINE RECOMMENDATION:** Alsatian whites, like Sylvaner, and a dry Riesling go well with this dish.

**1 12-ounce (340-gram) block momein (medium-firm) tofu**

**¼ cup (68 grams) miso**

**2 tablespoons (25 grams) sugar**

**2 tablespoons (30 milliliters) mirin or 1 tablespoon (12 grams) sugar dissolved in 1 tablespoon (15 milliliters) cooking sake**

Preheat the broiler. Wrap the tofu with a paper towel and place in a microwaveable container. Microwave for 3 minutes on high to get rid of any excess water, then set aside to cool.

Make the sauce. In a microwaveable container, mix the miso, sugar, and mirin and microwave for 2 minutes.

Cut the tofu into 8 slices. Place the pieces on a foil-lined baking sheet. Spoon the miso sauce over the tofu.

Broil the tofu until the sauce begins to brown, about 10 minutes.

Transfer to individual plates and serve.





# TERIYAKI FISH

Teriyaki sauce, famous all over the world, is made from fermented sake, called mirin. Various types of teriyaki sauce are sold in supermarkets, but you can easily make your own at home. Just mix mirin, sake, soy sauce, and sugar in a saucepan and boil the mixture until slightly reduced. The ratio is always the same: two parts mirin, two parts sake, and two parts soy sauce to one part sugar. To make teriyaki fish rich, pan-fry the fish first and then coat it with the sauce. To make the dish light, marinate the fish for about 20 minutes and then grill or broil it. Or use the method below, which both marinates the fish and cooks it in the sauce. Use this sauce for albacore, cod, halibut, mahi-mahi, salmon, scallops, and swordfish. It is also delicious on baked tofu and vegetables. **SERVES 4**

**WINE RECOMMENDATION:** Choose a fruity Chardonnay or a Loire Valley Chenin Blanc for their rich taste.

- 4 fish fillets with or without skin, about 1 pound (450 grams) total**
- 1 teaspoon (6 grams) kosher salt or sea salt**
- 2 tablespoons (30 milliliters) mirin**
- 2 tablespoons (30 milliliters) soy sauce**
- 2 tablespoons (30 milliliters) cooking sake or dry vermouth**
- 1 tablespoon (12 grams) sugar**
- 1 tablespoon (15 milliliters) vegetable oil**
- 4 bulbs pickled young ginger**

Rinse the fillets under running water and pat dry with paper towels.

Sprinkle the salt on both sides of the fillets and set aside at room temperature for 15 minutes.

Meanwhile, in a small bowl mix together the mirin, soy sauce, sake, and sugar. Stir until the sugar is dissolved.

Place the fillets in a large bowl. Pour the sauce over the fillets and turn to coat. Marinate at room temperature for 5 minutes.

Heat a frying pan over medium-high heat, then turn the heat to low. Film the pan with the vegetable oil. Place the marinated fillets in the pan (reserve the marinade) and cook until browned on both sides, turning once, about 1 minute per side.

Pour the marinade over the fillets and cook for an additional 2 minutes. Both sides should be coated and glossy.

Transfer to a platter. Garnish with pickled ginger and serve.



# SAUTÉED FISH WITH BUTTER & SOY SAUCE

This sautéed fish is a wonderful, quick dish. A simple combination of butter and soy sauce outshines any elaborate concoction. On the TV program *Dining with the Chef*, I always say, “Overcooking is a big no-no.” That certainly applies when cooking fish—the protein hardens, and the fish gets dry. Heat control is crucial. Sautéing over high heat works only with the kind of thick pan used by professional chefs. When you are using a Teflon-coated pan, the type more common in the home kitchen, low heat results in soft and tender fish. As a rule, sauté 4 to 5 minutes for a fillet  $\frac{2}{3}$  inch (1½ centimeters) thick and 6 to 7 minutes for a fillet that is 1 inch (2½ centimeters) thick. Mackerel, flounder, red snapper, sole, catfish, bluefish, halibut, salmon, albacore, yellowtail, and cod are all good candidates for sautéing. **SERVES 4**

**WINE RECOMMENDATION:** Creamy oaked Chardonnays go well with this buttery sauce.

**4 Spanish mackerel or other fish fillets, with skin, about 1 pound (450 grams) total**

**1½ teaspoons (9 grams) kosher salt or sea salt**

**2 tablespoons (30 milliliters) cooking sake or dry vermouth**

**1 tablespoon (15 milliliters) soy sauce**

**1 teaspoon (4 grams) sugar**

**¼ cup (30 grams) all-purpose flour**

**4 tablespoons (60 grams) unsalted butter**

**8 shiso leaves or basil leaves**

Rinse the fillets under running water and pat dry with paper towels.

Sprinkle the salt on both sides and set aside at room temperature for 15 to 30 minutes to dehydrate.

Meanwhile, make the sauce. In a small bowl, mix together the sake, soy sauce, and sugar.

Dredge the fillets in the flour just before frying. Heat a frying pan and melt the butter in the pan over medium heat. When the butter has melted, reduce the heat to low and place the fillets in the pan skin side down. Cook without moving for 4 minutes, then turn over and fry for an additional 2 minutes on the other side. Add the sauce to the pan and turn the fillets to coat. Transfer the fried fillets to a platter and pour the sauce over them.

Quickly cut the shiso leaves into a thin chiffonade, then scatter on top of the fish and serve.



# SAUTÉED CHICKEN WITH TERIYAKI SAUCE

When I was growing up, my mother often put this delicious teriyaki chicken dish in the bento boxes my sister and I brought to school. I love teriyaki sauce so much that I used to sidle up to my mother and whisper, “Put more sauce in my bento.” Teriyaki sauce for meat and poultry is a simple mix of mirin, sake, soy sauce, and sugar, always in equal amounts. (Teriyaki sauce for fish contains a little less sugar.) This sauce can also be used on beef, lamb, pork, duck, and meatballs. There are two ways to apply teriyaki sauce. The first is the method described in this recipe, which is to sauté the meat until tender, then add the sauce and reduce it together with the protein. The second is to reduce the sauce on its own, marinate the meat in the reduced sauce, then barbecue or broil the meat. Sansho pepper is the Japanese version of Szechuan pepper. It is commonly used for yakitori and is particularly delicious here. **SERVES 4**

**WINE RECOMMENDATION:** Try a bottle of Gewürztraminer or Oregon Pinot Noir.

- 2 boneless chicken thighs (with skin)**
- 3 tablespoons (45 milliliters) soy sauce**
- 3 tablespoons (40 grams) sugar**
- 3 tablespoons (45 milliliters) cooking sake**
- 3 tablespoons (45 milliliters) mirin**
- 1 tablespoon (15 milliliters) vegetable oil**
- Freshly ground sansho or black pepper to taste**

Remove any fat from the chicken thighs and prick both sides evenly with a fork. Score the chicken to give it a uniform thickness.

In a medium bowl, combine the soy sauce, sugar, sake, and mirin.

Place the oil in a frying pan and add the chicken skin-side down. Cook, covered, over medium heat for 4 minutes.

Blot any excess oil from the chicken with paper towels, turn the thighs over, and cook over low heat for 3 minutes.

Pour the sauce over the chicken in the frying pan. Simmer until the sauce reduces and glazes the chicken.

Cut the chicken into slices. Sprinkle with sansho and serve immediately.



# STEWED SWEET & SOUR PORK RIBS

In the United States, pork ribs are for barbecues, but in Japan, we usually make them into a stew with soy sauce and sugar. Use spare ribs if you want a richer taste, and back ribs if you prefer a lighter one. Below I provide instructions for using a pressure cooker, but if you don't have one you can stew this on the stovetop instead. Use 2 additional cups of water and simmer, covered, for 2 hours. A pressure cooker is a handy tool, however, and very useful for those of us who are busy. **SERVES 4**

**WINE RECOMMENDATION:** Have a glass of Dolcetto or Barbera d'Alba with spare ribs. A good bottle of Rioja is an apt match for back ribs. If you prefer white, look for a full-bodied wine from Alsace.

**2½ pounds (1 kilogram plus 130 grams) pork ribs**  
**1 cup (240 milliliters) water**  
**½ cup (120 milliliters) sushi vinegar**  
**½ cup (120 milliliters) cooking sake**  
**3 tablespoons (45 milliliters) soy sauce**  
**5 slices ginger**  
**1 clove garlic, sliced**  
**1 dried red chili pepper**

Cut the ribs perpendicular to the bone, feeling along the bone for the soft spot. (Or ask your butcher to do this for you.)

In the pot of a pressure cooker, combine the ribs, water, vinegar, sake, soy sauce, ginger, garlic, and chili pepper.

Cook at high pressure for 25 minutes.

Remove from the heat and allow the pressure to release naturally as the pot sits for 10 to 15 minutes.

Transfer the ribs to a serving platter along with any sauce and serve immediately.





# CRISPY JAPANESE PORK CUTLETS

Tonkatsu is a global favorite. The contrast of crispy panko breadcrumbs and soft meat inside is mind-blowing. Use panko with bigger flakes so you avoid having the heat from the oil reach the meat. The exact frying time will depend on the thickness of the meat. The basic formula is to cook a  $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch- (2-centimeter-) thick slice of pork loin in 340°F (170°C) oil for 6 minutes, then remove to a plate, where it will continue cooking with the residual heat. **SERVES 4**

**WINE RECOMMENDATION:** A dry Riesling goes well with this dish. A fruity good bottle of Rioja is also a good match. If you are using pork shoulder, which is fattier, balance the rich taste with Montepulciano d’Abruzzo.

**4 boneless pork loin chops, 5 ounces (140 grams) each and  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch (2 centimeters) thick**

**$\frac{1}{3}$  cup (40 grams) unbleached all-purpose flour**

**1 large egg, beaten**

**1 cup (50 grams) large-flake panko breadcrumbs**

**2 tablespoons (30 milliliters) Worcestershire sauce**

**2 tablespoons (35 grams) ketchup**

**1 teaspoon (4 grams) sugar**

**1 teaspoon (5 grams) kosher salt or sea salt**

**Freshly ground black pepper to taste**

**Vegetable oil for frying**

**3 or 4 cabbage leaves, shredded**

Let the meat come to room temperature, about 30 minutes. Place the flour in a shallow soup bowl, the egg in a separate bowl, and the breadcrumbs on a sheet pan. Rest a rack on a separate sheet pan.

For the Tonkatsu sauce, in a small bowl mix the Worcestershire sauce, ketchup, and sugar and set aside.

Make several small cuts in the fibers on both sides of the chops along the border where the meat meets the fat to stop the meat from curling. Season the chops on both sides with salt and pepper. Dredge in the flour. Then dip in the beaten egg and finally dredge in the breadcrumbs.

Place several inches of oil for frying in a large pot with high sides. Bring to 340°F (170°C).

Deep-fry the chops in the oil until golden, about 3 minutes per side. Regulate the temperature of the oil to keep it steady, and work in batches if necessary to keep from crowding the pan. Transfer the cooked chops to the prepared rack to drain and let them rest for 2 minutes.

Slice each cutlet into 5 or 6 pieces. Place the cabbage and the pork on a serving plate, and serve the prepared sauce on the side.



# JAPANESE- STYLE BEEF BARBECUE

American barbecue is all about large portions of meat cooked over an open flame. But for Japanese barbecue, or yakiniku, we cook thin slices of marinated beef on small portable grills or stovetop grills. Restaurants specializing in yakiniku are equipped with a gas or charcoal grill at each table, with powerful duct fans overhead. This sauce is my husband's recipe. He is a fanatic yakiniku lover. Recommended cuts are chuck roll, short rib, sirloin, and my personal favorite, skirt steak. **SERVES 4**

**WINE RECOMMENDATION:** Try a Zinfandel from California or a Primitivo from Puglia. The sweetness of the sauce goes well with them.

**¼ cup (40 grams) grated pear or apple**

**¼ cup (24 grams) grated ginger**

**1 tablespoon (9 grams) grated garlic**

**¼ cup (50 grams) sugar**

**¼ cup (60 milliliters) cooking sake**

**¾ cup (180 milliliters) soy sauce**

**1 tablespoon (21 grams) honey**

**1 tablespoon (15 milliliters) sesame oil**

**1 tablespoon (10 grams) toasted sesame seeds**

**1 teaspoon (5 grams) kosher salt or sea salt**

**2 pounds (900 grams) beef**

**Leaves of 1 head butter lettuce**

In a large bowl, combine the pear, ginger, and garlic. Add the sugar, sake, soy sauce, honey, sesame oil, sesame seeds, and salt. Combine thoroughly.

Slice the beef into ¼-inch- (7-millimeter-) thick slices. Pound gently with a mallet to tenderize.

Place the slices in the prepared soy sauce mixture, cover with plastic wrap, and marinate the slices in the refrigerator until you are ready to grill them and for at least 10 minutes.

When you are ready to grill the meat, prepare a gas or charcoal grill. Lightly oil the grill grate. Grill the beef, turning once, about 2 minutes total.

Make a bed of lettuce leaves on a serving platter. Arrange the cooked meat on top and serve. Diners can make wraps with the leaves, placing a few slices of meat in each one.

# STEAMED JAPANESE SHORT-GRAIN RICE

Japanese short-grain rice is distinctively sweet because it is grown in soft water. When cooked, it is slightly sticky compared to drier long-grain rice. You do not need a special rice cooker to make perfect rice, and you do not need to cook it right before eating. Cook 3 to 4 cups of rice at a time and wrap it in plastic wrap while it is still warm and moist. You can microwave the rice to reheat it just before serving. I find the Japanese-style short-grain rice sold in the United States requires a little less cooking water than the short-grain rice sold in Japan. In Japan I would use 580 milliliters, or a scant 2½ cups, for this amount of rice. **MAKES 4½ CUPS**

**(1 KILOGRAM) COOKED RICE, ABOUT 4 SERVINGS**

**2 cups (420 grams) Japanese short-grain rice**  
**2½ cups (560 milliliters) water**

Place the rice in a large bowl. Run cold tap water over the rice. Rinse and drain immediately.

Gently rub the rice with your hands. Add water again, mix gently, and drain. Repeat this process 4 more times.

Place the rice in a large pot with a heavy bottom and add the scant 2½ cups (560 milliliters) water. Let the mixture sit for 30 minutes. Don't try to skimp on this step. Your rice will be hard and dry.

Cover the pot with a lid and bring to a boil over high heat. Once the water starts to boil, turn the heat to low and cook, covered, for 13 minutes. Remove from the heat and serve immediately.

**NOTE:** Some people like to fluff and stir the rice after it is cooked and let it steam further, but I prefer the rice to remain firm in the center. I gently scoop the rice into small bowls without mixing it.



# BEEF RICE BOWL

Gyudon (beef over rice) is a popular donburi dish. For this dish, do not go for a fancy cut of beef. A fatty cut, such as chuck or shoulder, will give you better results. Japanese gyudon shops offer an amazingly wide variety of choices for a bowl of gyudon. You can customize your gyudon with different sauces, as well as onion, soft-boiled eggs, and pickled ginger strips, or beni-shoga. **SERVES 4**

**WINE RECOMMENDATION:** Try a bottle of Gewürztraminer or Tokay Pinot Gris from Alsace. If you prefer red, Cerasuolo di Vittoria from Sicily goes well with this dish.

**1 pound (450 grams) beef chuck or shoulder**  
**1 batch Steamed Japanese Short-Grain Rice (page 150)**  
**1 naganegi onion or yellow onion**  
**1 2 x 2-inch (5 x 5-centimeter) piece ginger**  
**⅓ cup (80 milliliters) cooking sake**  
**⅓ cup (80 milliliters) mirin**  
**⅓ cup (80 milliliters) soy sauce**  
**3 tablespoons (37 grams) sugar**  
**1 cup (240 milliliters) water**  
**4 poached or soft-boiled eggs**  
**Shredded pickled ginger to taste**

Wrap the beef in plastic wrap and freeze for 1 to 2 hours. Slice the meat against the grain into slices about ⅛ inch (5 millimeters) thick, and pound each slice to tenderize.

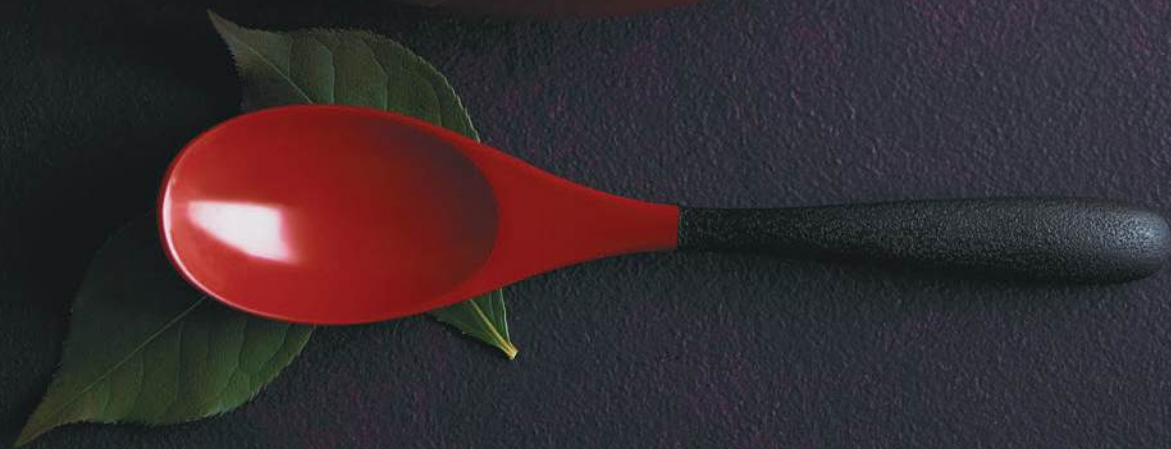
Cook the Steamed Japanese Short-Grain Rice following the recipe on page 150.

Cut the onion diagonally into ½-inch (1½-centimeter) slices. Peel the ginger and slice thinly. Cut the thinly sliced beef into bite-sized pieces.

Put the onion, ginger, and beef in a large saucepan and add the sake, mirin, soy sauce, sugar, and water. Stir to combine, bring to a boil, then reduce the heat to low and simmer for 7 minutes.

Place the rice in a bowl and top with the simmered beef and onion. Top each serving with an egg and some shredded pickled ginger.

**NOTE:** If you cannot find premade shredded pickled ginger, mix one part sushi vinegar to one part rice vinegar, then add julienned ginger and let it sit for 30 minutes to pickle.





# JAPANESE CHICKEN CURRY WITH RICE

Curry made with Indian spices was first brought to Japan from the United Kingdom and has since evolved to please Japanese palates. Instant curry roux, an essential ingredient in Japanese curry, is easy to find these days. The brands House, S&B, and Glico are good choices. The roux contains spices such as turmeric, cumin, coriander, cardamom, and garam masala. Simply sauté and boil vegetables of your choice and any kind of meat in a pot and add the flavorful ROUX. SERVES 4

**WINE RECOMMENDATION:** A glass of chilled fruity rosé made from Grenache is a good match. Ripe, buttery California Chardonnay also stands up well to the strong flavor of curry.

- 1 batch Steamed Japanese Short-Grain Rice (page 150)**
- 1 large yellow onion**
- 2 russet potatoes**
- 2 carrots**
- 2 boneless, skinless chicken thighs**
- 1 tablespoon (15 milliliters) extra-virgin olive oil**

- 3 cups (720 milliliters) water**
- 3 ounces (85 grams) Japanese curry roux**
- Chili pepper to taste**
- Shredded pickled ginger to taste**
- Naganegi onions to taste**

Cook the Steamed Japanese Short-Grain Rice following the recipe on page 150.

Cut the onion into eight wedges. Peel the potatoes, halve them, and then cut each half into quarters. Do the same for the carrots.

Cut each chicken thigh into eight pieces.

Place the olive oil in a saucepan and sauté the vegetables over low heat. Add the chicken and the water and bring to a boil. Skim off any foam and fat that rise to the surface.

When the vegetables are soft enough to pierce with a paring knife, remove the pan from the heat. Mix in the curry roux until fully dissolved. If the sauce seems overly thick, thin by adding water in small amounts. Stir in the chili pepper.

To serve, place rice on individual serving plates. Warm the curry and pour over the rice. Serve with pickled ginger and naganegi onions.



# STIR-FRIED UDON NOODLES

Stir-fried udon, yakiudon, is an easy and extremely popular meal. You can replace the pork here with another protein: chicken, beef, shrimp, and clams are all popular options. You can also use cabbage and mushrooms in addition to or in place of the carrots. The key to making good stir-fried udon is the boiling time. Boil noodles (or microwave frozen ones) until they are al dente. Drain and then sauté the noodles so that they are cooked the rest of the way through. The dish has a complex flavor, despite being quite simple to make. **SERVES 4**

**WINE RECOMMENDATION:** This dish calls for a fruity white wine from the south of Italy—Puglia, Sicily, or Sardinia.

**2 tablespoons (30 milliliters) oyster sauce**

**1 tablespoon (15 milliliters) soy sauce**

**¼ cup (60 milliliters) water**

**2 teaspoons (8 grams) sugar**

**1 teaspoon (2 grams) curry powder**

**½ teaspoon (3 grams) kosher salt or sea salt**

**4 servings frozen or dried udon noodles**

**2 tablespoons (30 milliliters) sesame oil**

**5 ounces (140 grams) pork belly or shoulder, cut into strips**

**½ large yellow onion, peeled and thinly sliced**

**¼ carrot, peeled and julienned**

**1 bunch scallions, chopped**

**Sansho to taste**

In a small bowl, combine the oyster sauce, soy sauce, water, sugar, curry powder, and salt and mix well. Set aside.

Cook the udon noodles according to the package instructions. (Frozen udon can be cooked in a microwave as well as boiled.) Drain in a colander.

Heat the sesame oil in a large frying pan over low heat and stir-fry the pork until cooked through. Raise the heat to medium, add the onion and carrot, and stir-fry until tender.

Add the udon noodles and the oyster sauce mixture. Cook, tossing, until the noodles are coated with the sauce. Transfer to a serving platter, garnish with chopped scallions and sansho, and serve.