

Times for food

Japanese food

It's that sauce that makes the difference

By JO ANN STEVENSON
Times staff writer

Slurping soup in some areas of Japan is an ancient and honorable custom. Because the Japanese use chopsticks for their soup, etiquette permits them to raise their soup bowls to drink their broth. Says Joe Ohori, "the louder the slurp the hotter the soup, which means the more thoughtful the hostess."

Ohori, of the Japan Food Corporation, lives in Clarkson. He distributes a soy sauce called Kikkoman that is naturally brewed to a potent flavor. "It is possible to make an authentic soup merely by adding a few drops of Kikkoman to boiling water. A few dried sliced mushrooms could be floated on top," says Ohori.

"You don't need special equipment to prepare foods Japanese-style," he says. An ordinary electric skillet or frying pan will cook most traditional Japanese dishes. Japanese cooking adapts to both universal ingredients and utensils. In a recipe, local chefs might substitute beef and chicken for shellfish, which is more usual in Japan. Yakitori (which are shishkabobs) alternate meat or fish and

vegetables and are cooked over an open grill or barbecue.

To stock a kitchen for Japanese cooking, buy Japanese vinegar, rice, soy bean paste and soy sauce.

According to Ohori, Japanese chefs simply shook a few drops of the "Japanese ketchup" over everything they prepared. "The result was so fantastic, there was no need to develop the intricate cooking techniques that made the French famous," laughs Ohori.

The Japanese value the natural taste, aroma and texture of food, and strive in their cooking to bring out this natural flavor. An essential part of the palate pleasing technique is to arrange the cooked food on serving plates in an attractive way.

In old Japan, a cook was called a "slicer man." He traditionally roamed from town to town with his knife razor-sharp looking for someone to teach him something new in the preparation of food.

Japanese food often is linked with Chinese in occidental thinking, but the Japanese rely more on fresh fish and vegetables and use less pork and oil than the Chinese.

In all Japanese dishes, it is likely that shoyu or soy sauce has been used.



Joe Ohori, supplier of Japanese ingredients to the Santaro restaurant at the Ramada Inn on Dixie Road introduces Times writer Jo Ann Stevenson to the wonders of Japanese cuisine. Jo Ann discovered she didn't need to invest in special cooking utensils to cook authentic Japanese dishes. She experimented with a few recipes and passes along her favorites (below). KEN KERR THE TIMES

**Don't
eat
out—
cook
it
at
home**

Japanese cooking isn't hard and the results are special. Surprise your family with a meal they'll want you to repeat again — and again — and again.

CHICKEN YAKITORI

3 pounds chicken breasts
1 pound chicken livers
4 green onions
¾ cup soy sauce
¼ cup sugar
1 tbsp. salad oil
2 cloves crushed garlic
½ tsp. ground ginger
Cut the meat into one-inch squares, livers into one-inch pieces and onions into one-inch lengths. Spear one of each on a bamboo skewer. Blend together the remaining ingredients and place the skewers in a shallow pan. Pour the sauce on top and marinate them for about an hour. Then drain, reserving the marinade. Broil the kebabs under a broiler, about three minutes on each side. Marinate them after turning. Makes about four dozen kebabs.

SEAFOOD AND VEGETABLE TEMPURA

16 shrimps, shelled, butterflied and deveined
4 fish fillets, cut into two-inch squares



Jo Ann Stevenson

2 green peppers, cut into two-inch squares
celery cut into two-inch pieces
carrots, peeled and sliced diagonally in ¼-inch slices
eggplant or zucchini, unpeeled and sliced ¼-inch thick
large fresh mushrooms, sliced ¼-inch thick

Heat oil in a deep pan to 375 degrees. Fry the fish and vegetables to be fried.

Make a batter:
one large egg
1 cup water
2 cups cake flour

Beat an egg thoroughly and add the water, the colder the better. Sprinkle the flour over the water and whisk the flour into the liquid. Batter should be lumpy. Dip the shrimp into batter holding it by the tail. Drain off excess batter and slip into the oil.

Fry three or four at a time, cooking for about one minute or until golden brown. Drain on paper towels or a wire rack. Dip and fry other ingredients in the same manner.

Serve the tempura with a sauce in individual bowls.

Sauce:
1½ cups hot water
½ cup soy sauce

¼ tsp. ginger (grated and fresh)
⅛ tsp. MSG

Combine ingredients and pour into small bowls for dipping.

SIMPLE CHICKEN TERIYAKI

½ cup soy sauce
¼ cup water
2 tbsp. sugar
1 clove crushed garlic
¼ tsp. ground ginger
1 tbsp. salad oil
3-pound chicken, cut in pieces
Mix together the first five ingredients. Heat the oil in a large frying pan that has a lid. Brown the chicken over medium heat until golden, about 15 minutes.

Remove the chicken and drain off excess fat.

Return the chicken to the pan and cover with liquid sauce.

Bring to a boil and cover and simmer at low heat for 45 minutes turning the chicken occasionally. This serves four and is nice with rice.



Chef of the week

Mitsuo Anzai, the Japanese chef at Santaro on the top floor of the Ramada Inn on Dixie Road gives Times readers the secret of cooking rice to that sticky-but-good texture common to Japanese restaurants. Rinse three cups of California rice well under cold water. Use a deep pan with a tight fitting lid. To the rice add three cups of water. Cover tightly and heat the rice over medium heat until it steams (about ten minutes). Then turn off the heat and let it sit another ten minutes. The rice is ready to serve along with ginger or yakitori sauce.

KEN KERR/THE TIMES