

Taste of Japan - Miso Soup Recipe



The paper lanterns above the doorway swayed gently in the wind. Archie stepped inside, letting the door slide shut behind him with a soft *shhkh*.

Warmth wrapped around him instantly like slipping under a cosy blanket. The air smelled earthy and rich. A mix of sea breeze and warm toast, with a hint of something Archie couldn't quite name.

His stomach rumbled.

At the counter, a man in a white apron stirred a pot of steaming broth. The chef looked up, smiling. "Cold outside, huh?"

Archie nodded. "Smells amazing in here. What is that?"

The chef ladled something golden and cloudy into a small wooden bowl. "Try this."

Archie held it close and took a sip. The taste was a little salty, a little nutty, and had the warmth of chicken soup... but lighter, with something ocean-y in the

background. Tiny cubes of tofu melted on his tongue, and pieces of seaweed floated like ribbons in a pond.

He blinked. “Whoa. It’s like drinking the ocean... but in a *really* good way.”

The chef laughed. “That’s miso soup. It’s been part of Japanese life for over a thousand years.”

“A thousand?” Archie’s eyes widened. “What? Did samurai eat it or something?”

“Exactly,” the chef said, leaning on the counter. “Samurai warriors had it before battle to give them strength. Even earlier than that, farmers, monks, and fishermen drank it to start their day. It was simple to make and filled with umami, the ‘fifth taste’ that makes food feel extra satisfying.”

Archie took another sip. “Tell me more. Who invented this?”

The History of Miso Soup



Archie from the Intrepid Explorers is cooking miso soup!

Miso soup is one of Japan's oldest and most beloved traditional dishes. The key ingredient, miso paste, is made from fermented soybeans, rice or barley, and salt, creating a thick, flavorful base packed with nutrients and probiotics.

The soup dates back to at least the Heian period (794–1185), when it was mostly enjoyed by nobles and monks. But by the Kamakura period (1185–1333), it had spread to the samurai class, who needed easy-to-prepare food that was rich in energy and easy to transport. Dried miso paste was even carried into battle!

Over centuries, miso soup became a staple of daily life in Japan. Today, it's still commonly eaten at breakfast alongside rice, fish, and pickled vegetables.

Every region in Japan and every family has its own twist. Some use dark, robust miso; others prefer white, mild versions.

Make Your Own Miso Soup!

Prep time: 10 minutes

Cook time: 20 minutes

Difficulty: Easy

Serves: 4 hungry explorers

Ingredients:

30g (1 oz) kombu (dried kelp) – for the broth

1 cup dried bonito flakes (katsuobushi)

½ cup dried wakame seaweed – this seaweed expands a lot!

¼ cup white miso paste (shiro miso) – or use red miso if you like a stronger flavour

100g silken tofu, cut into small cubes

¼ cup thinly sliced spring onions (scallions)

You can find kombu, bonito flakes, and wakame at most Asian or Japanese grocery stores.

Instructions:

1. Make the Dashi (broth)

Place the kombu and 6 cups of cold water into a saucepan. Heat gently over medium, don't rush it! Let it slowly warm for about 15–20 minutes until it just starts to steam.

Turn off the heat, sprinkle in the bonito flakes, and let them swirl and steep like sea confetti for 5 minutes. Then strain the liquid into a clean saucepan and discard the

kombu and bonito flakes.

2. Prepare the Wakame

While the broth is infusing, place the dried wakame in a bowl and cover it with just-boiled water. Leave it for about 15 minutes. It'll magically rehydrate and grow soft and silky. Drain and set aside.

3. Bring it All Together

Put the dashi stock back on medium-high heat. When it starts to gently simmer again, scoop out about ½ cup of the hot broth into a separate bowl. Stir the miso paste into this small amount of broth and mash it with a fork until smooth.

Now pour the miso mixture back into the pot, but don't let it boil! Boiling miso spoils its delicate flavour.

Add in the cubed tofu, softened wakame, and sliced spring onions. Give it a gentle stir... and you're ready to serve!

Enjoy or Itadakimasu as they say in Japanese!

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