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A Taste of Japan

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We ensure that in every dish we prepare, we add the best herbs and spices specially handpicked from Nepal and India. With our belief deeply rooted in the Eastern philosophy, we regard every customer as a god, and make sure in every way that we treat them as one. Our 5-star experienced cooks and chefs ensure the food looks as good as it is healthy. Once you come and visit us, we are confident that you will make plans to come again. We eagerly await the opportunity to serve you our delicacies!!
On a day in mid-October, I tried cooking paella, a Spanish dish for the first time. Several months back, I had tried ajillo and it went pretty well. So, I decided to give Spanish cuisine another go, hoping for a short gastronomical getaway from the ordinary.

I was aware of paella’s popularity in the world, but was definitely surprised just how many recipes were available online. Many of the recipe photos featured colorful ingredients and fresh clams, shrimp and other delicious seafood, but I didn’t want to spend a lot of time prepping for my meal. Fortunately, I found this recipe using frozen mixed seafood—perfect for a lazy chef like me!

As soon as the ingredients started to hit the pan, the aroma had me looking forward to a great meal. Once the time is up, I was ready to take the lid off and dig in straight out of the pan.

I had seen paella served up in a huge pan and people share the food. This style probably serves to make the dish sociable. But in my case, I just couldn’t wait to try the food.

The taste easily exceeded my expectation. The cooked rice did a great job of absorbing the seafood’s savor. And it is well balanced with the taste of lemon and parsley. Slices of bell peppers added a nice accent of textures.

In fact, it turned out to be one of the best dishes that I cooked on my own and it took me less than 10 minutes to finish the panful of food!

Later, I learned that I’d just missed World Paella Day on Sept. 20. This day, according to the World Paella Day Cup organization, is dedicated to “the most universal plate of Spanish gastronomy.” The organization hosts cooking competition events in search of the best paella chef in the world.

Though the recipe I tried was simpler in comparison to what the Paella Cup contestants bring to the table, my paella day was just as special.

How to make!

1. Pour olive oil into a pan and fry chopped garlic first, to be followed by chopped onion, and frozen mixed seafood.

2. Once the seafood is cooked, take it out and put it on a separate plate. The juice extracted from the seafood will be used in the next step.

3. Fry uncooked rice in the frying pan. Once the rice becomes transparent, put in white wine (or sake), salt, pepper, water, and tomato sauce. Mix them gently.

4. Cover the frying pan with aluminum foil and cook it over medium heat. Once vapor comes out, change it to low heat and cook for 10 minutes.

5. Take the cover off and put the seafood and sliced bell peppers on top of the rice. Cover the frying pan with the aluminum foil again and cook it over low heat for another 10 minutes.

6. Once the rice is cooked, turn heat off and leave the cooked rice covered for a few minutes.

7. Top with sliced lemon and parsley. Buen provecho or いただきます (Bon appetite)!

Ingredients

- Uncooked rice (180 cc)
- Onion (1/2 piece)
- Lemon slices
- Frozen mixed seafood (150 g)
- Garlic (2 pieces)
- Bell peppers (sliced, as much as you please)
- Parsley or Italian parsley (as much as you please)
- Olive oil (30 ml)
- White wine of sake (30 ml)
- Salt and pepper (as much as you please)
- Water (300 cc)
- Tomato sauce (50 cc)
- Saffron (as much as you please)
Mainland Japan and Okinawa aren’t left out of the healthy food craze

BY TAKAHIRO TAKIGUCHI, STRIPES JAPAN

Just as in America, superfoods are currently a trendy topic in Japan. Visit a convenience store or drug store, and you will find a rack exclusively for superfoods, such as chia seeds, maca and spirulina. Magazines and TV programs often feature these trendy foods, as well.

Despite the trend and high media exposure, some don’t know what superfoods are all about.

“They are natural, organic foods, mostly vegetables, which pack a lot of essential nutrients and vitamins,” says Ayumi Katsuyama, managing director of the Japan Superfoods Association. “They are usually low in calories but rich in nutrition that prevents us from forming various lifestyle-related diseases, such as cancer and diabetes.”

Today, JSA lists spirulina, maca, Chinese wolfberry, cacao beans, chia seeds, coconut, acai, camu camu, broccoli sprout and hemp seeds as the 10 primary superfoods.

“These foods have proven their superb health effects and food safety throughout the long history of usage,” Katsuyama said.

Why are these “super” foods getting so much attention these days?

“As it is getting harder and harder to sample natural foods free from additives, agrochemicals and contaminated soil and water, we have become more aware of the relationship between our health and foods,” Katsuyama said. “Eventually people noticed that powerful foods in the world, such as maca in Peru and Chinese wolfberry (kukonomi) in China, were improving the health of local people.”

Although these raw vegetable materials were only available exclusively to locals, modern technology has enabled them to be frozen or powdered and delivered to any part of the world without spoiling the nutritional quality.

So, most superfoods are actually processed products, according to Katsuyama.

The term “superfood” dates back to the 1980s when physicians in North America who were applying healthy diet in their medical treatment, began calling foods that had outstanding nutritional values “superfoods”. Then, two books, “14 Foods that will change your life” (2004) and “Superfoods” (2009), helped to establish the moniker.

Categorized as foods, superfoods are neither medicines nor supplements.

“As supplements contains artificial additives, overdosing them can cause physical troubles,” Katsuyama said.

Although it’s unclear what the true definition of a superfood is, thanks to global marketing approach of major food companies, today, they are widely available in convenience stores and grocery stores even in Japan.

Health conscious American celebrities have helped them to become popular, according to Katsuyama.

“Since they started applying the foods to their everyday diet, people see the foods fashionable as well as healthy,” she said.

How can we apply these superfoods daily to improve our health?

“Nowadays, it is next to impossible to avoid all foods contaminated with farming chemicals and artificial additives,” Katsuyama said.

“So, we would recommend you add some superfoods in your daily diet. Just put some spirulina powder into your dishes, for instance, to improve your health.”

JSA actually promotes superfoods by developing various products in Japan’s market, such as powders or noodles made from acerola and spirulina.

Japanese foods: superb in nature

According to Katsuyama, many Japanese foods can be called superfoods in their nature. “Nominated as one of the UNESCO World Heritage, Japanese cuisine is superb - it is tasty and nourish while it has unique sophisticated culture,” she said.

What makes Japanese cuisine unique is that its depends on dasmi stock made from dried groceries, such as shiitake mushroom and kelp. These are all low in calories and contain a lot of superb minerals. Habitual drinking of green tea, instead of juices or other white-sugar beverages helps Japanese to enjoy such longevity, according to Katsuyama.

JSA categorizes Japanese superfoods into four groups – fermented foods, tea, seasonings and natural foods.

1. Fermented foods: soy sauce (shoyu), organic miso, organic shiitake mushroom bran, amazake, Japanese rice vinegar
2. Teas: matcha green tea, hojicha, for example, daytime drinking of green tea
3. Seasonings: wasabi, shiitake mushroom bran, soy sauce, shiitake mushroom, kombu
4. Natural foods: natto, rice, shiitake mushroom, soy sauce, natto, rice, shiitake mushroom, soy sauce, natto, rice
Japan's superfoods

1. Chia seeds: Also known as "black sesame" seeds, they are rich in omega-3 fatty acids and provide a good source of dietary fiber.
2. Seaweeds: One of the most popular seaweeds in Japan, nori contains plenty of vitamins A and B, along with calcium and iron. It is often compared to yogurt. A mugwort tea, bancha (course tea) and green vegetables picked in a fermented rice bran doubles or triples the vitamins and minerals of normal vegetables.
3. Umeboshi: Pickled plum is rich in citric acid and calcium, combats fatigue, stimulates digestion and promotes the elimination of toxins. Eating a couple of them before and after meals helps to keep the nervous system healthy and improve blood circulation and lowering blood pressure.
4. Soba: Buckwheat noodles are low in calories and contain a lot of protein, vitamins B and E, this fermented food is considered to improve gut health and is effective at preventing radiation sickness and preventing cancer.
5. Natto: A traditional Japanese food made from fermented soybean paste, which is rich in NattoKinase, mucin, and is considered to keep stomachs healthy and beautiful.

The superfoods are also an important part of Japan’s traditional cuisine. Since it contains a lot of protein, it is considered to lower the risk of several chronic diseases including cardiovascular disease. It is also rich in isoflavone, and is considered to lower blood pressure.

同時に、乳酸菌が活発に活動し、腸内環境を改善し、便秘を解消する効果も期待できる。
Easy Oyakodon Recipe
How to make Japan’s definitive donburi dish!

How to make oyakodon

1 Slice the onion thinly. Cut the chicken into large bite-sized pieces while cutting away the excess fat.

2 In a frying pan on medium heat, add and mix the bonito soup stock, soy sauce, sake rice wine, sugar, and mirin (or substitute). While the sauce is heating up, break the eggs into a bowl and aggressively beat until there is no remaining white.

3 Once the broth is simmering, add the chicken and onion and allow it to cook for up to 4 minutes on medium heat while occasionally turning it over. While they’re cooking, place your desired amount of cooked rice into a bowl.

4 Once the chicken has been thoroughly cooked, turn down the heat a little and pour over the egg in a circular motion starting from the center and heading to the sides. Adding it from the center ensures that the egg will be evenly cooked. Also, keeping the heat at a stable temperature where the broth is simmering lightly will help create the perfect oyakodon!

5 Once you’ve added the beaten egg, immediately close the lid and allow it to simmer for 30 seconds to 1 minute. Once the egg is half cooked, turn off the heat. Scoop out a large portion with a spatula and place it on top of the rice. And you’re done! For a touch of color, add some Japanese mitsuba leaves. For extra flavoring, sprinkle on shichimi togarashi spice or Japanese sansho pepper.

* The information in this article is current as of September 2021.

Oyakodon is a nourishing household dish beloved by all!

Oyakodon is a kind of Japanese donburi dish made by simmering chicken in a dashi soup stock flavored with soy sauce, sugar, and mirin, before running an egg over it and placing it atop of rice.

The name “oyakodon” means “parent and child bowl” in Japanese, which refers to the literal parent and child of a chicken and egg.

Oyakodon originated around 1887 from a Tokyo chicken restaurant. It has since grown to become a staple household dish across the nation, being easy to make, highly filling, and perfect for busy professionals or the insatiable appetites of children.

Depending on the region of Japan, the oyakodon recipe is different, with residents of Kanto preferring egg doused over chicken and onion with a sweet and salty soy sauce base.

At the same time, those in Kansai use chicken, spring onion, and egg with a light dashi flavoring. For this recipe, we’ll be using Kanto ingredients with light Kansai flavors.

Ingredients

(Serves Two)

- 200g chicken thigh
- 1/2 onion
- 2 eggs
- 400g rice (cook in advance)
- 150ml bonito soup stock (dashi)
- 2 tbsp soy sauce
- 1 tbsp sake rice wine (white wine works too!)
- 1/2 tbsp sugar
- 1 tbsp mirin
- A sprinkling of Japanese mitsuba leaf (optional)

* If you don’t have mirin, mix 1/3 tbsp sugar with 1 tbsp white wine for a substitute.

* To make bonito soup stock, check out Dashimaki Tamago Recipe.

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Check out the video on how to make!
It tastes as good as it sounds

Beginning with an Eric Clapton guitar, Hard Rock Cafe owns the world’s greatest collection of music memorabilia, which is displayed at its locations around the globe. For fans of music, great food and good times, Hard Rock is the go-to restaurant to get that authentic American diner-inspired cuisine wrapped in a unique musical experience. So, it’s time to strike up the band! Events, like great music, are born to inspire others. At Hard Rock Cafe, we pride ourselves on delivering an exceptional experience with a rock ‘n’ roll twist for each and every one of our guests.

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