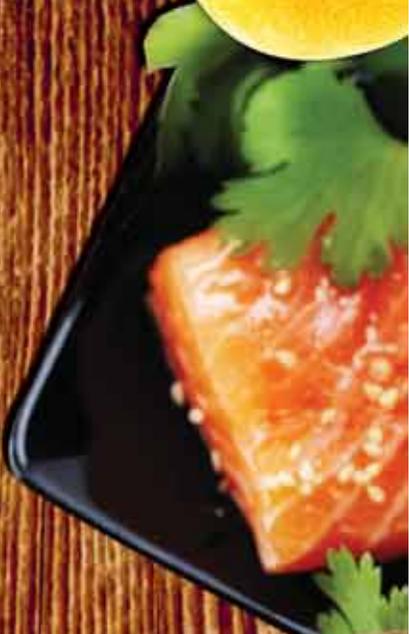


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# A Taste of Japan



The 3 'R's to good eating –  
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**8-page pullout**





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### RESTAURANT INFO



STORY AND PHOTOS BY SHOJI KUDAKA,  
STRIPES JAPAN

**O**n 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 gastronomic 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!

I easily found every ingredient I needed down to the saffron at my local grocery store. The cooking itself took about an hour without any problems. The recipe required a pan with a lid, but since I didn't have a lid, I made one out of aluminum foil.

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 painful 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.

kudaka.shoji@stripes.com

## 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)

## How to make!



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



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.



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.



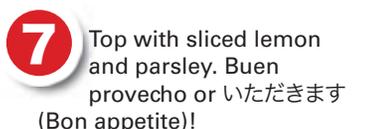
Cover the frying pan with aluminum foil and cook it over medium heat. Once vapor comes out, change it to low heat and cook for 10 minutes.



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.



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



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

Based on recipe from Cookpad.



It's a fruit ...  
 it's a vegetable ...  
 it's a SUPERFOOD

## Mainland Japan and Okinawa aren't left out of the healthy food craze

BY TAKAHIRO TAKIGUCHI,  
STRIPES JAPAN

**J**ust 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

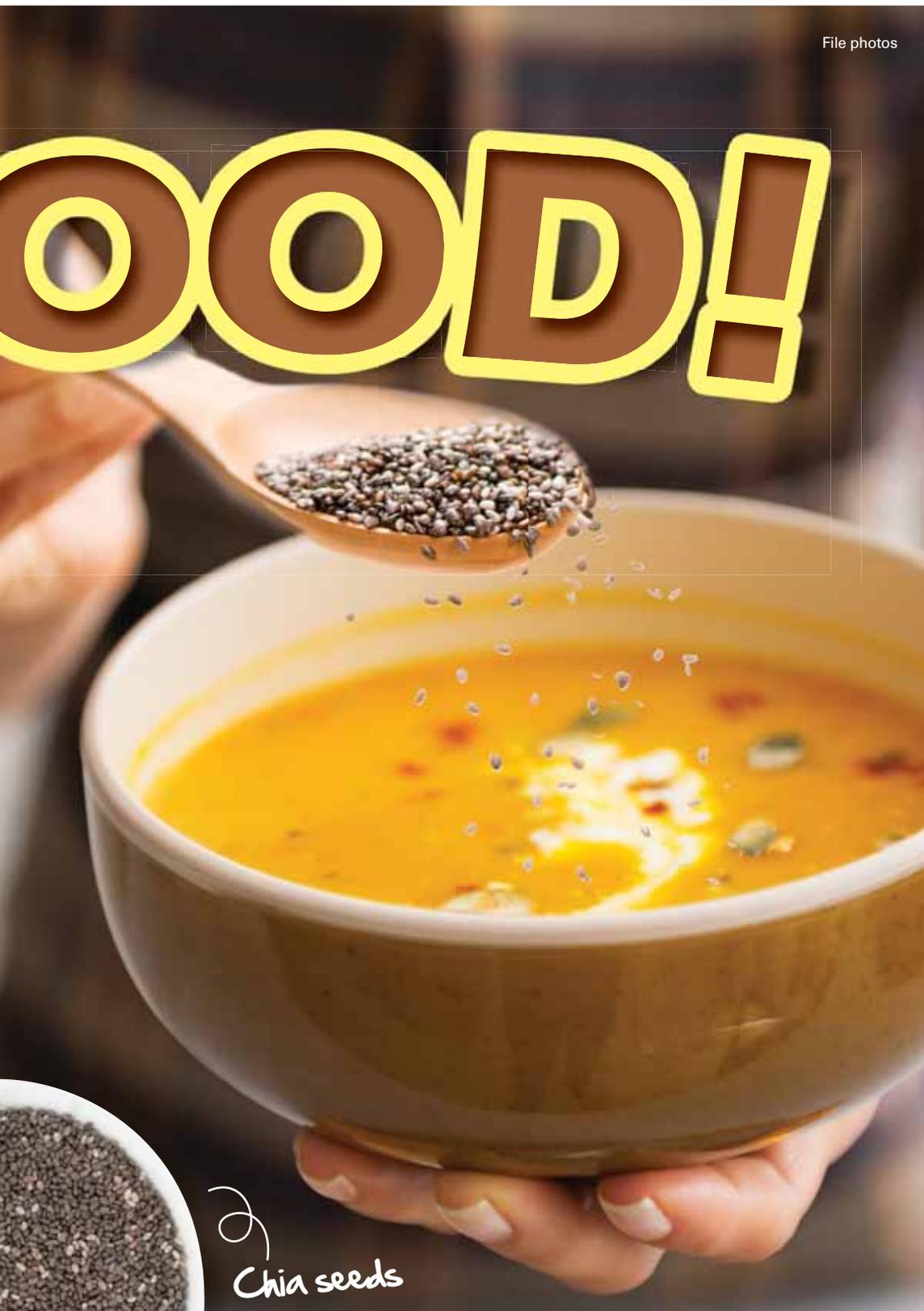
According to Katsuyama, many Japanese foods can be called superfoods in their nature. "Nominated as one of the UNESCO World Heritage, Japanese cuisine is superb - It is tasty and nourish while it has unique sophisticated culture," she said.

What makes Japanese cuisine unique is that its depends on dashi 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, teas, seaweeds and natural foods.

1. Fermented shoyu (Japanese soy sauce), kadu (vegetable), kaduke (vegetable bran), amazake (fermented rice), amazake bran, amazake
2. Teas: machi



File photos

Chia seeds



seaweeds and traditional foods: natto, miso, (Japanese soy-sauce), nuka-vegetables pick-fermented rice sake green

tea, bancha (course tea)  
 3. **Seaweeds:** konbu (kemp), nori, hijiki, kanten  
 4. **Traditional natural foods:** umeboshi (pickled plum), edamame, genmai (unmilled rice), tofu, soba, azuki  
 Among various fermented foods, Katsuyama pointed out amazake as one of the best superfoods. Made from fermented sake lees, amazake is often compared to yogurt.  
 “Yogurt, however, is a dairy product and contains animal fat and some people are concerned that the over ingestion might lead them to chronic illness,” Katsuyama said. “On

the contrary, amazake contains only vegetable fat and is very effective in protecting us from various lifestyle-related illnesses. Plus, the price of amazake is very reasonable.”  
 Located in Japan, you can enjoy these superfoods in your dairy diet anytime.  
 “Pay attention to superfoods and incorporate them more into your daily consumption,” Katsuyama said. “This will help keep you conscious about your health and surrounding nature and environment, and that is sure to contribute to your quality of life as a result.”  
[takiguchi.takahiro@stripes.com](mailto:takiguchi.takahiro@stripes.com)



Natto



Matcha



Umeboshi

# Japanese Superfoods

## Natto

A traditional Japanese food made from fermented soybeans and served with soy sauce, mustard and Japanese bunching onion. Along with its powerful smell, strong flavor and slimy texture, it contains a lot of protein, vitamin K, dietary fiber, NattoKinase, mucin, and is considered to keep stomachs healthy and beautiful.

## Tofu

Bean curd. Being basic whole food nature, it contains a lot of protein and isoflavone, and is considered to lower the risk of several chronic diseases including cardiovascular diseases.

## Miso

Fermented soybean paste, which is used in soups in Japanese cuisine. Since it contains 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.

## Soba

Buckwheat noodles are low in calories and contains a lot of lutein and vitamin B. It is also thought to help with anti-aging, preventing degenerative diseases, improving blood circulation and lowering blood pressure.

## Umeboshi

Pickled plum is a traditional Japanese snack, usually dried and preserved in a salty brine using shiso leaves. Umeboshi 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 a party may prevent hangover, as well.

## Nori

One of the most popular seaweeds in Japan, nori contains a lot of calcium (10 times as much as milk), copper, iron, vitamins A, B, C, D, E and K, and is considered excellent at regulating and purifying blood. It is also helps reduce cholesterol levels.

## Nukaduke

vegetables picked in a fermented rice bran. Since vegetables picked in a fermented rice bran doubles or triples the vitamins and minerals of normal vegetables, plenty of vitamins A and B, along with calcium and iron help to keep the nervous system healthy and improve constipation.

– Source: “Best 50 Superfoods”  
 “Shokuhin Seibunhyo” and “Superfood Benricho”  
[takiguchi.takahiro@stripes.com](mailto:takiguchi.takahiro@stripes.com)



Nori



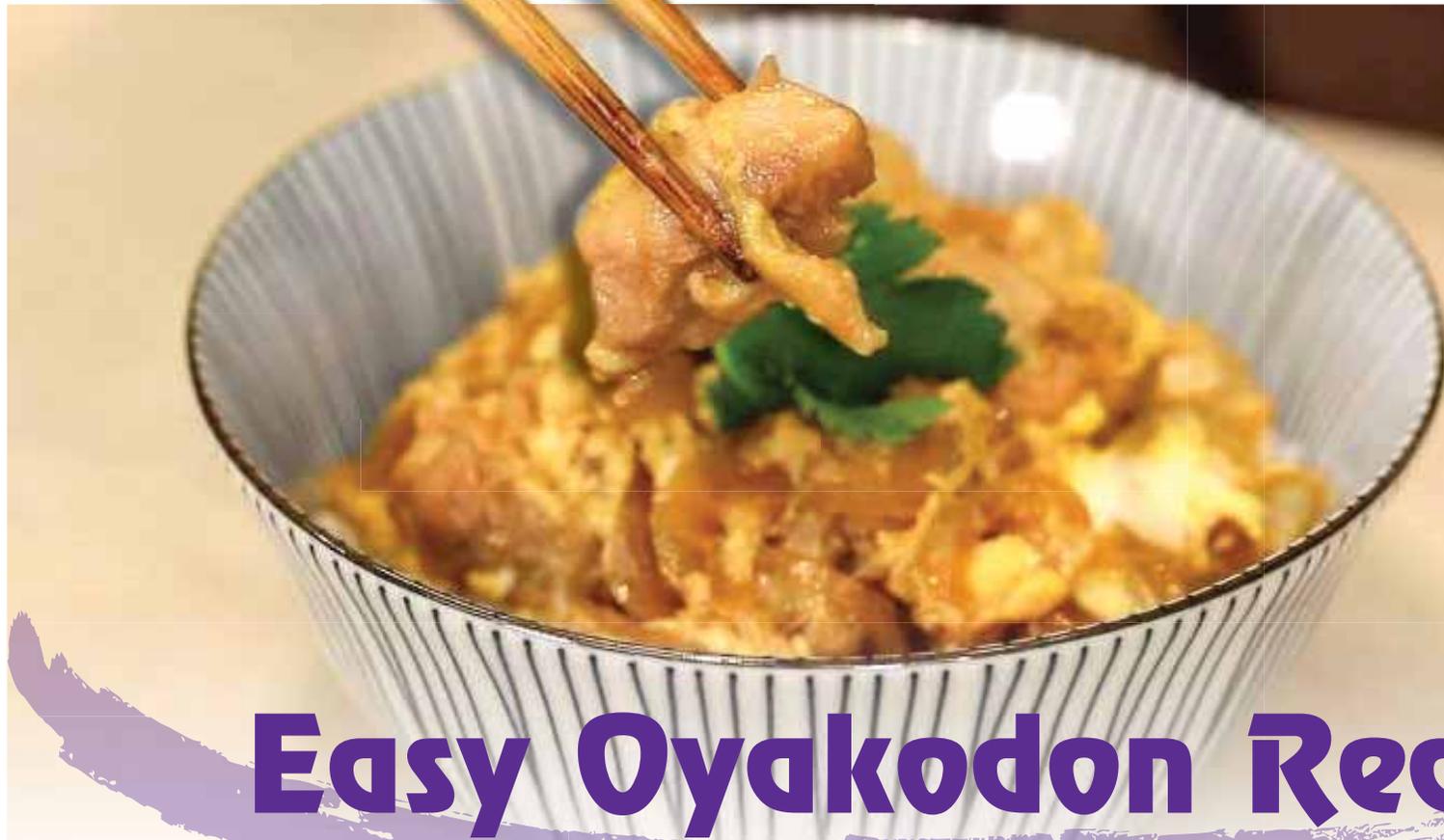
Nukaduke



Soba



Tofu



**Chef profile**

**Introducing the Recipe Supervisor and Cook**

Toshihiro Minami is the manager of cooking studio Osaka Delicious. Initially working at another company, he joined a night school and changed careers to become a cooking class instructor. He also develops recipes, acts as a cooking assistant, and makes television appearances. In addition to all varieties of Japanese food, Toshihiro is in charge of a wide range of cuisines including western and Chinese.



<http://osakadelicious.jp>

# Easy Oyakodon Recipe

How to make Japan's definitive donburi dish!

STORY AND PHOTOS BY EFEEL,  
LIVE JAPAN

While trips remain off in the future, you can easily reminisce about your Japan journeys with authentic Japanese dishes at home! Here we present a tried-and-tested oyakodon recipe, which sees chicken simmered in dashi topped with egg and rested upon a bowl of steaming white rice.

In addition to common ingredients like chicken and egg, we'll be using a recipe offering substitutes for Japanese condiments like "mirin" to make it even easier.

This recipe was also supervised and prepared by Japanese cooking instructor Toshihiro Minami and comes with a cooking video attached, so all you have to do is watch as you cook to bring the tastes of Japan to life!

\*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.

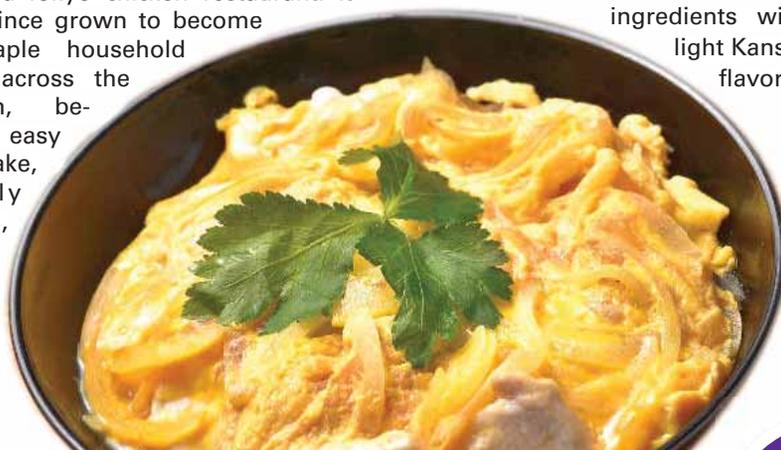
The name "oyakodon" means "parent and child bowl" in Japanese, which refers to the literal parent and child of a chicken and egg.

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 tsp sugar
- 1 tsp mirin
- A sprinkling of Japanese mitsuba leaf (optional)

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



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

## How to make oyakodon



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



**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!



**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.



Check out the video on how to make!



**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 fluffy and runny egg thoroughly absorbs the savory dashi to form an exquisite harmony with the hearty chicken. Being a simple dish, it's super easy to cook and is packed with nutrients and flavor!



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# A Taste of Japan

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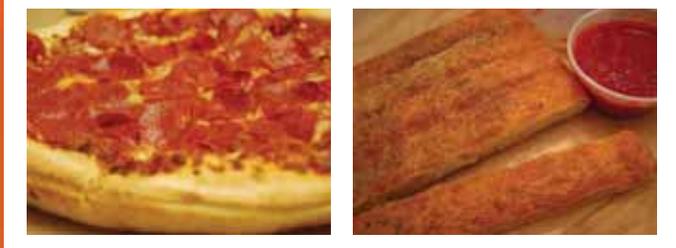
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