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A Taste of Okinawa

The 3 'R's to good eating –
Restaurants,
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4-page pullout

Makin' Mochi Donuts

STORY AND PHOTOS BY ELEONORA BADELLINO,
BYFOOD

Mochi donuts are sweets made from glutinous rice flour, famous in Japan (and elsewhere) for their soft and pleasantly chewy texture, described by the Japanese onomatopoeia *mochi-mochi*.

You can easily purchase them in Japanese bakeries and supermarkets, where they can be found in the classic donut form (ring-shaped, with a hole cut out from the center), as a large puff filled with cream or *anko*, or made up of several little balls forming a circle.

This latter version is very reminiscent of the *pon de ring*, donuts sold by the large company Mister Donut all over the world. But unlike Mister Donut's *pon de ring* recipe, which creates their *mochi-mochi* texture by using tapioca flour, *mochi* donuts often use *shiratamako* (glutinous rice flour) instead.

Previously, we've brought you a versatile *mochi* ice cream recipe as well as a *mochi* cake recipe, and today we're bringing you another modern variation of the Japanese chewy rice cake! In this recipe, I decided to make *mochi* donuts in their most famous form, inspired by Mr. Donut's *pon de ring*, and glaze them at the end with sweet icings inspired by Japanese confectionery: matcha, *kinako* (toasted soybean powder), and *yuzu*.

To make the best *mochi* donuts, texture plays an important role. Part of their softness is due to the cooking process, which involves deep-frying them in oil at around 170 degrees Celsius (approximately 240 degrees Fahrenheit). The temperature of the oil plays an important role as it will ensure that the outer surface does not burn, and that the inside of the donut is cooked to perfection.

In addition, the cooking time is also crucial for the formation of the donut. To allow the balls to bind together during baking, place them on baking paper and then in the hot oil. After a few minutes, the paper will peel away from the dough, which will keep cooking and bind together. All you have to do is remove the paper from the oil and continue cooking your donuts.



Mochi Donut Ingredients

Makes about 5 donuts

- 100g *shiratamako* (3.5oz)
- 200g *velvety* tofu (7oz)
- 100g cake flour (3.5oz)
- 50g caster sugar (1.8oz)
- 5g baking powder (1 tsp)



Preparation

In a bowl, put the *velvety* tofu (without draining it; I recommend smashing it through a colander to make it creamier and easier to mix) and the *shiratamako* and mix well. Add the flour, sugar, and baking powder, and mix further.



Shaping Pon de Ring style Mochi Donuts

Once the dough is ready, it's time to shape the little balls. I divided the dough into 8 equal parts, and further divided each slice in half to obtain several balls of similar size.



To be more precise, I weighed them (each ball was about 8 g).



Now, make a circle with 8 balls close together (make sure they are well attached or they will split during baking). Do this by placing the balls on squares of baking paper.



Frying the Mochi Donuts

Take a small saucepan and heat the oil over medium heat until it reaches 170°C.



Fry the donuts for about

6 minutes (3 minutes per side) and take them out once they are golden brown.



Place on a wire rack and drain off the excess oil.



White chocolate matcha glaze

Matcha is now an ingredient that is readily available all over the world. It is a distinctive element of Japanese cuisine, and as such, its use in desserts is a must!

Did you know that there are two different versions of matcha depending on its use?

Ceremonial Matcha: Higher quality matcha, as it is the result of only one harvest per year from the "virgin" leaves of the highest part of the tea plant. The result is matcha with a delicate taste and fine nuances in flavor.

Culinary Matcha: The result of several harvests throughout the year from the lower leaves on the plant. The result is matcha with strong flavors, slightly more bitter, and able to stand out when mixed with other ingredients.

Before buying matcha, think about how you will use it, and always take a look at the packaging!

Ingredients

- For 5 donuts
- 120g white chocolate (4.2oz)
 - 1 tbsp matcha powder

Directions

While the donuts are cooling, break up the white chocolate in a bowl and cook it in the microwave for 2-3 intervals of 30 seconds each. At each interval, remove and stir with a teaspoon.

Once melted, sprinkle in the spoonful of matcha and mix everything together.

Dip the donut in the chocolate, and shake off the excess chocolate. Then, place it on a cooling rack.

Leave to dry and serve.



Yuzu juice glaze

Yuzu is a symbol of the arrival of the cold season here in Japan, and between the months of November and January, it is celebrated in many forms. *Yuzu* is a citrus fruit that tastes very much like a mix between an orange and a grapefruit.

The largest producer of *yuzu* in Japan has for years been Kochi prefecture, particularly Kitagawa Village. But given its popularity, cultivation now extends throughout the country.

With the coming of winter, supermarket shelves and sweet shop windows in Japan are lined with *yuzu*-themed products; from alcoholic beverages to savory snacks, seasonings for meat and vegetables, and even desserts!

Ingredients

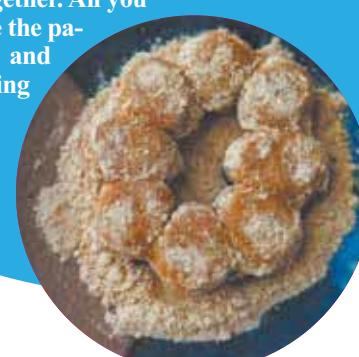
- For 5 donuts
- 130g icing sugar (1 cup)
 - 2 tablespoons of *yuzu* juice
 - *Yuzu* peel for decoration, grated

Directions

While the donuts are cooling, mix together the sugar and *yuzu* juice until smooth.

Dip the donuts in the glaze, place on a wire rack to remove excess, and sprinkle with grated *yuzu* peel.

Allow to dry and serve.



Kinako powder coating

Kinako (literally "yellow powder") refers to soybeans that are roasted and ground into a tasty flour, used mainly in Japanese pastries (like *kinako mochi* and *warabi mochi*).

The taste and smell of *kinako* is similar to that of roasted hazelnuts; quite nutty. It is often mixed with sugar and then used as a topping for various desserts including *mochi* and, in more modern times, even fried bread!

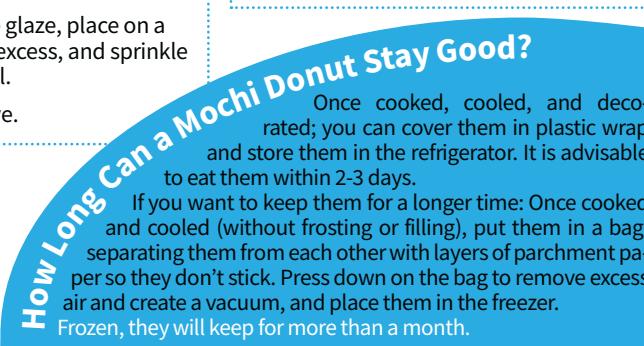
Ingredients

- 1 cup brown sugar (7.1 oz)
- 2 cups of *kinako* powder (16 oz)
- Bowl of lukewarm water

Directions

While the donuts are cooling, combine the *kinako* powder and sugar in a bowl and mix.

Prepare a separate bowl with lukewarm water and proceed in the following order: dip the donuts in the lukewarm water and then in the *kinako* mixture. Make sure that all the edges are completely covered with powder, and serve.



Once cooked, cooled, and decorated; you can cover them in plastic wrap and store them in the refrigerator. It is advisable to eat them within 2-3 days.

If you want to keep them for a longer time: Once cooked and cooled (without frosting or filling), put them in a bag, separating them from each other with layers of parchment paper so they don't stick. Press down on the bag to remove excess air and create a vacuum, and place them in the freezer.

Frozen, they will keep for more than a month.

byFood is a platform for food events in Tokyo, with over 80 experiences to choose from and a fantastic resource for learning about Japan's thriving food culture! What's more, *byFood* runs a charitable outreach program, the Food for Happiness Project, which donates 10 meals to children in Cambodia for each person who books a food event through our platform!



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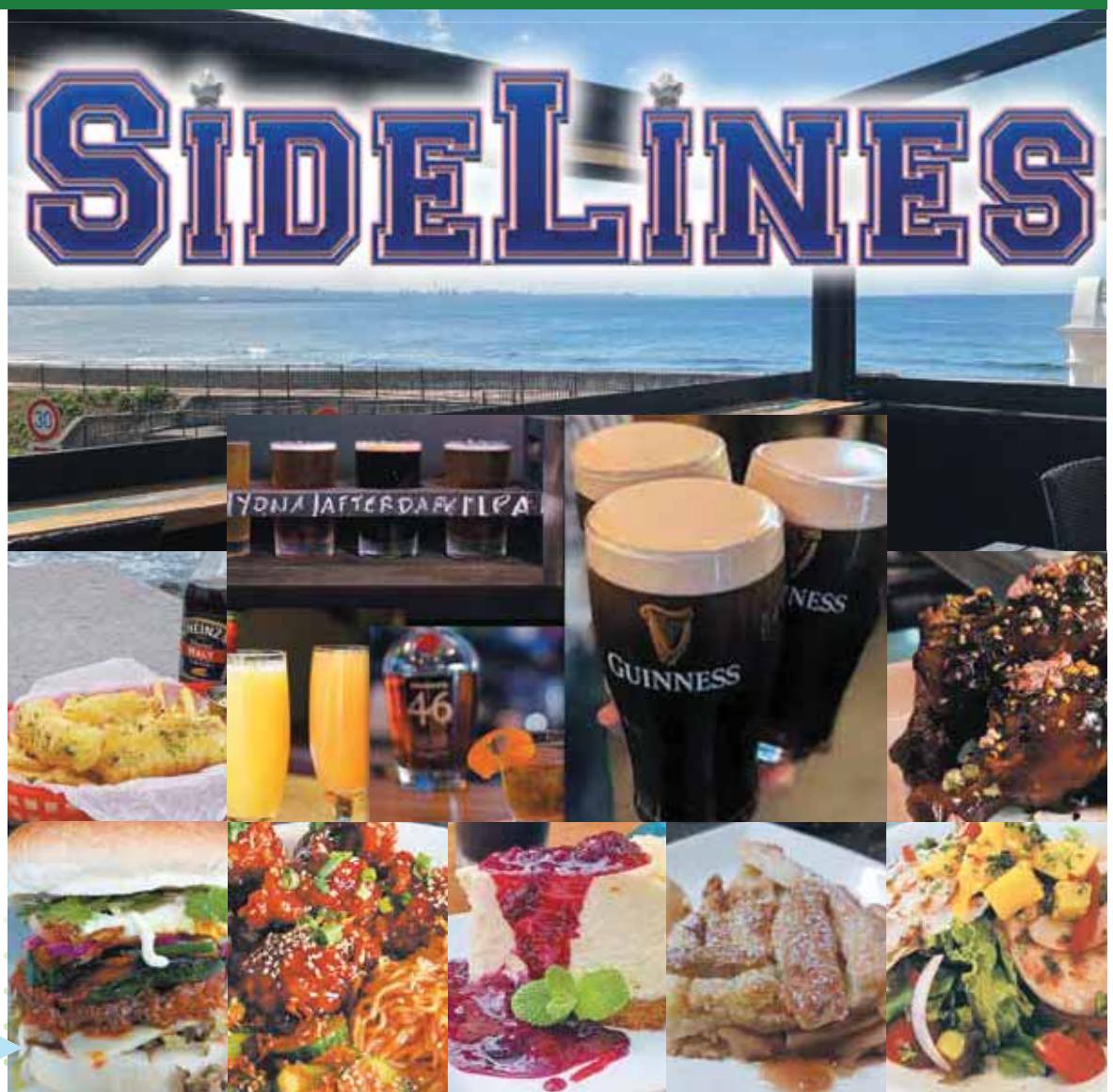
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