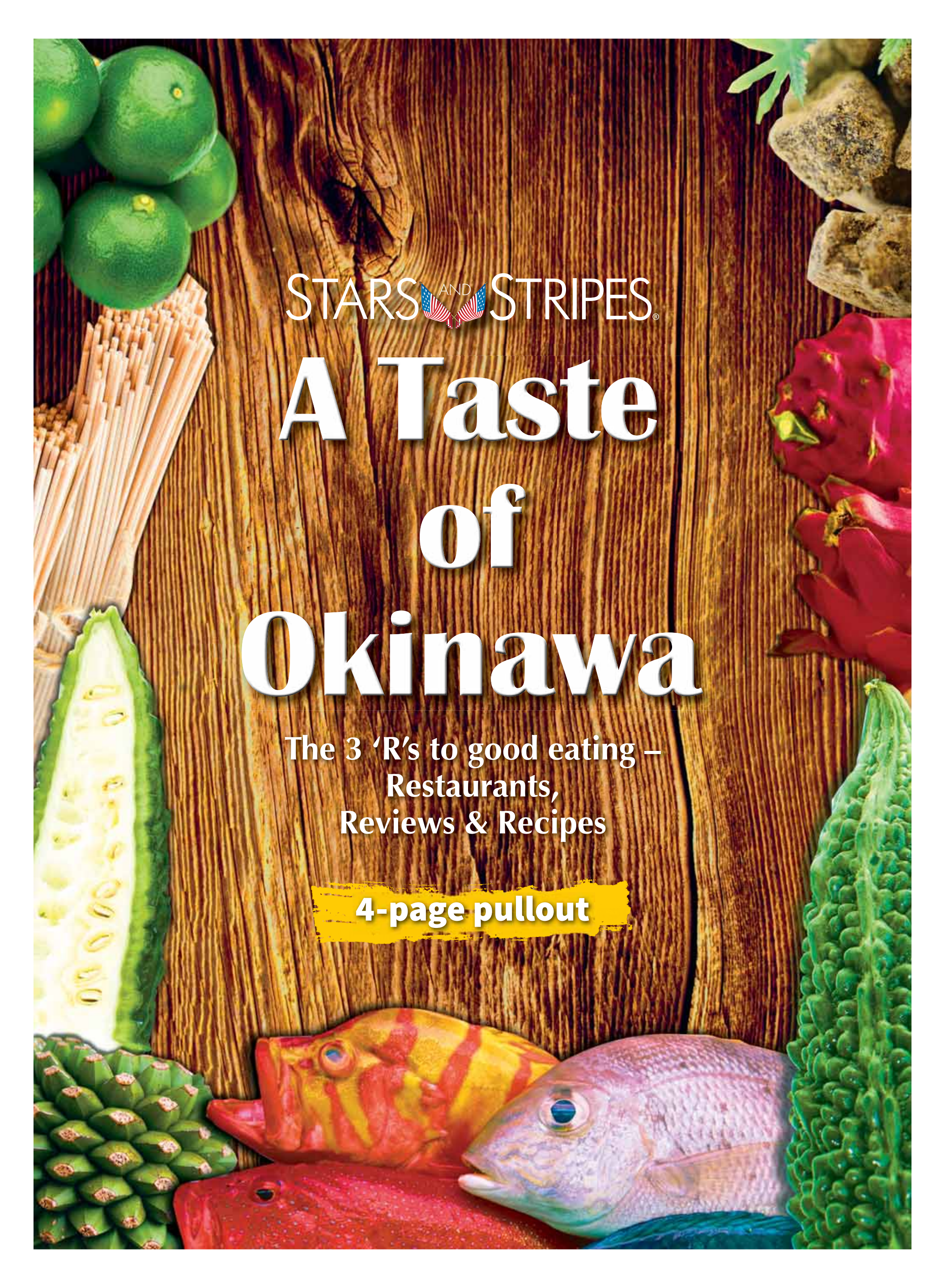




STARS  AND STRIPES[®]

A Taste of Okinawa

The 3 'R's to good eating –
Restaurants,
Reviews & Recipes

4-page pullout



STORY AND PHOTOS BY SHOJI KUDAKA,
STRIPES OKINAWA

If you have attended a festival in mainland Japan or Okinawa, you may have tried takoyaki. This ball of batter with chopped octopus inside is a beloved comfort food of Osaka, and a popular festival food nationwide.

After watching an episode of “Daigo mo Daidokoro,” a Japanese cooking show where Daigo, a TV talent/musician who advertised himself as a kitchen novice, made takoyaki with no difficulty, I decided it was time for some stress-free fun in the kitchen.

Based on his success, I assumed cooking this dish would be easy.

I was proven way, way wrong.

After researching online, I chose a recipe published by Asahi Beer. The accompanying photo featuring takoyaki balls served up with a glass of beer looked too enticing to refuse.

All the ingredients were available at a supermarket in my neighborhood, and the recipe seemed simple. Plus, I could borrow an old, dimpled takoyaki pan my mother happened to own.

Preparing batter and slicing octopus arms into small pieces was easy.

The challenging part started, however, when I started to pour the batter into the pan.

I was expecting the batter to thicken as it cooked, allowing me to grab it and turn it into a ball. No matter how long I waited, the batter remained adamantly

fluid. Soon, something started to smell like it was burning.

Of course it was the batter.

The batter at the bottom of the dimples was overcooked and the rest remained in its liquid state.

It was very sad to see my batter forming not into takoyaki balls, but into burnt blobs.

I still had batter left, so I improvised and added more flour to thicken it. Then, I painstakingly scraped the burnt blobs and carefully cleaned the stubborn batter clinging to the bottoms of the dimples.

Would this method work? I was sweating and holding my breath when I poured the batter into the pan for

the second time. My hopes, however, were miserably crushed by the staunch mixture 10 minutes later.

After the second failure, I abandoned

the recipe and settled on my last resort: store-bought pre-made Takoyaki dough. After struggling so much, I was open to cutting every single corner.

The batter seemed thicker than my from-scratch batter, so my expectations were slowly growing. However, my hope lasted only about 10 minutes when I was in the same quagmire of overcooked and undercooked.

I delicately checked the dimples with a skewer to see if anything was salvageable and found a few were turnable. My last-ditch effort somehow salvaged a few takoyaki balls out of the 14 dimples of the pan.

I let my father taste the survivors of the cooking disaster. To my surprise, he liked them and said they were good, “although they are a little too soft on the inside.”

I threw in the towel after three tries and used the remaining batter to make an okonomiyaki-style pancake in a regular pan.

Try your hand at the takoyaki recipe below and if you’re like me, then you might enjoy a takoyaki-flavored okonomiyaki for dinner, too!

Next time I try, I’ll probably need to get a new takoyaki pan to prevent the batter from sticking.

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Takoyaki

(A recipe by Asahi)

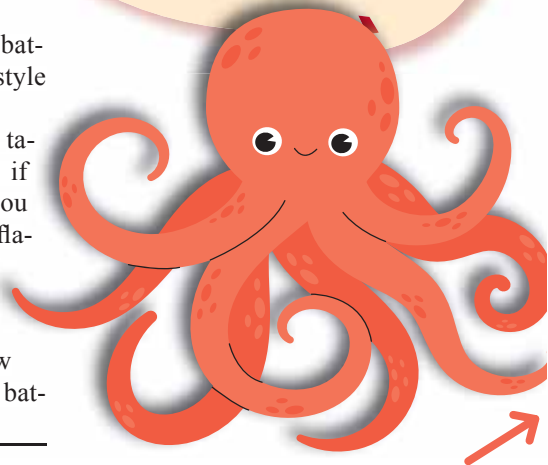
INGREDIENTS

(for five people, 25 balls of a 3-centimeter diameter)

- Egg: 1
- Broth: 550 ml (I prepared this by boiling a broth bag just like you would do with a tea bag)
- Soy sauce: 7.5 cc
- Flour: 150 g
- Boiled octopus: 100 g
- Green onion: 5 pieces
- Red pickled ginger: 20 g
- Deep-fried tempura batter: 20 g
- Tiny, dried shrimp: 5 g
- Takoyaki sauce to taste
- Mayonnaise to taste
- Green laver powder to taste
- Bonito fish flakes to taste
- Salad oil as needed



View Video!



STEPS!



➔ **1** Beat egg in a bowl with a whisk and add broth and soy sauce. Add in flour in portions, stirring well each time. Once the ingredients are well mixed, cover the bowl with Saran wrap and refrigerate for 30 minutes.



2 Slice octopus into 25 pieces about 1 to 1.5 cm sides. Chop green onion and red pickled ginger into small pieces.



3 Heat up the pan for takoyaki and add in salad oil. To evenly spread the oil, soak kitchen paper in the oil and wipe the surface of the dimples with it.



4 Stir the mixture from Step 1 and pour it into the pan until it fills all the dimples.



5 Place a slice of octopus in each dimple. Evenly spread shredded green onion, red pickled ginger, deep-fried tempura batter, and tiny dried shrimp in the pan. Pour in the remaining batter.



6 When the batter begins turning white, slice it around each dimple with a skewer. Make a ball of batter turn in each dimple by tracing its surface while pushing the surplus batter into the hole.



7 Keep the balls turning and make them round. Make sure all the surfaces brown evenly.



8 Serve up the balls on a plate and top them with sauce, mayonnaise, powdered green laver powder, and dried bonito flakes.

YUMMY!

A Taste of Okinawa





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RESTAURANT INFO

A Taste of Okinawa

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RESTAURANT INFO