

DEEPLY REGIONAL JAPAN®

‘GOMAMISO-DARÉ’: JAPANESE SESAME AND MISO DRESSING

20, 21 and 22 May 2020



Blanched dandelion leaf salad with gomamiso-daré

Many around the world are familiar with miso through the miso soup, a mandatory accompaniment to a Japanese meal. However, in Japanese cooking, miso is more used as a flavouring agent. The amino acids produced during fermentation provides miso with rich umami that lends depth in flavour to any food that miso is added to. A huge number of traditional recipes for miso-based flavouring pastes, dressings and sauces exist, and one of the most popular is ‘gomamiso’, which combines miso with roasted white sesame seeds. The miso’s umami in combination with the rich nuttiness of sesame seeds is a flavour sensation that brings the blandest ingredients to life. The Japanese commonly use gomamiso in ‘gomamiso-daré’, or sesame–miso dressing, a popular accompaniment for blanched vegetables, salads, boiled tofu, lightly flavoured meats such as pork and chicken, and white-fleshed fish.

Much variation exists in the recipe for gomamiso-daré, with each household having its own ‘secret’ formula. Please feel free to experiment with the proportions of ingredients to suit your own taste; the addition of ingredients such as soy sauce, Japanese sake (can be substituted with vodka or semi-sweet white wine), minced garlic or chilli will provide an extra dimension to the versatile dressing sauce.

INGREDIENTS

- White sesame seeds ¼ cup
- White or red miso ¼ cup (adjust according to saltiness of your miso)
- Mirin ¼ cup
- Ginger root, very finely chopped or minced 1 tablespoon
- Water ¼ cup
- Sugar (optional) c. 1 level teaspoon or to taste
- Roasted sesame oil 1 to 2 level tablespoons

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Place the sesame seeds in a pan and lightly toast until aromatic and golden brown. Stir frequently for even roasting and take care not to burn the seeds, which will make the flavours bitter. Remove from the heat and allow to cool for handling.



2. Grind the toasted sesame seeds to a paste using a mortar and pestle or a food processor. Set aside.



3. Heat the sesame oil in a small saucepan on medium heat. Add the ginger and fry lightly until starting to soften.



4. In a cup, combine the miso with mirin and water and dissolve the miso until no lumps remain. Add to the saucepan, together with the ground sesame seeds and sugar (optional), stirring continually to mix thoroughly and to prevent burning. Simmer for two minutes or so until an even, slightly thickened consistency develops (it should still be runny like a sauce, not reduced to a paste). Remove from the heat and allow to cool to room temperature.



5. Once cool, your gomamiso-daré is ready to use in your cooking. For storage, transfer the sauce into a sealable container or jar and place in the refrigerator, where it will keep for at least a week. The sauce will keep for much longer if it is cooked thoroughly (at least 10 minutes of constant simmering) and sealed properly in a sterilised container or jar (as you would with jam making).