

Umami Food Ingredients

Drawing out
the unique richness
of each ingredient

With a distinctive richness, umami draws out the flavor of ingredients.

“Umami,” which appears in the presence of other foods, represents the “Fifth Taste” essential to Japanese cuisine.

Umami is one of the five tastes in Japanese cuisine and is said to be the fifth taste after sweetness, sourness, saltiness and bitterness. Fermented foods like cheese and vegetables like tomatoes contain high levels of *umami*. In Japanese cuisine, using the *umami* contained in seafood, seaweeds, mushrooms and fermented foods extracts the natural flavor of the respective ingredients and provides an excellent seasoning even in foods with low fat content. *Umami* represents the cornerstone of healthy Japanese food.

A variety of ingredients containing Japanese “umami.”

To use the *umami* element in Japanese cooking, water and *dashi* ingredients must be used to obtain *dashi* stock. Mostly dried ingredients are used to make *dashi*

stock. The *umami* elements increase during the drying and processing stages and nutrients are also concentrated. *Miso* paste or fermented soybean paste and soy sauce, both essential ingredients in Japanese cooking, also gain added *umami* during processing. It is well known that *sushi* and *sashimi* is eaten with soy sauce as the *umami* of soy sauce enhances the flavor of fish with minimal salt. Japan is blessed with a wealth of *umami* food ingredients that extract the natural taste of the raw ingredients.

Secrets behind the flavor of dashi stock - its constituents.

The constituents of *dashi* stock include inosinic acid and glutaminic acid, types of amino acids. It is known that these produce a stronger *umami* effect when used in combination. Just as meat flavor improves when simmered together with vegetables, savoring Japanese *dashi* stock in conjunction with food ingredients creates a masterpiece of flavor.

Using favorite Japanese seasonings in world cuisine.

Unusual combinations are delicious.

An increasing number of chefs around the world are using distinctive Japanese seasonings like soy sauce, *miso* paste and *yuzu* pepper. The unique aroma and sensory stimulation of these ingredients are popular among diners. They make ideal seasonings for vegetable dip, pasta sauces and stir-fried vegetables and enable diners to discover completely new flavors.



Yuzu pepper used in a French sauce.



A salad enjoyed with a sauce made of *miso*.



“*Katsuo bushi*,” dried and fermented bonito flakes.



“*Miso*,” fermented paste made from soybeans and usually rice or barley.



Soy sauce, made from soybeans, wheat, and salt by fermentation for several months.



“Cuisine without *dashi* stock is unimaginable.”

Japanese *dashi* stock has the power to extract the maximum innate flavor from food. It delivers low calorie cuisine finished with a rich taste.

Christopher Dawson
(Importer of Organic and Traditional Japanese Foods in London
Recipient of Award for Overseas Promotion of Japanese Food 2007)



The best ways of enjoying Japanese food

A feature of Japanese food is that it draws out the flavor of the ingredients. In order to realize this, it is important to identify the unique features of each ingredient and then prepare dishes to reflect these features. The visual appeal of each dish is also important. I make sure that the season is expressed in each dish that I create so that the meal has both visual appeal and flavor.

Komei Nakamura, Chef

Owner of "Komei Ariake." One of Japan's leading chefs of Japanese-style cuisine who gained popularity on television as an "Iron Chef."

