



Spicy Stir-Fry *Kimpira* 金平

Kimpira is a slightly sweet, tingly-hot stir-fry that can be made with vegetable peels and other scraps left from other dishes. A fiery blend of seven spices is always added at the end of cooking. Indeed, that is the origin of the name *Kimpira*, a character in a 17th century Japanese puppet-theatre play. He was known for his fiery ways.

Serves 4 to 6

About 10 ounces julienne-shredded vegetables and/or peels (carrots, burdock root, parsnips, tender gingerroot, celery, daikon radish, potato peels and/or bell peppers are all good choices. Lotus root cut in thin half circles is also wonderful)
1/2 teaspoon *goma abura* (aromatic sesame oil)
1/2 teaspoon sugar
1 teaspoon *saké* (Japanese rice wine)
2 tablespoons *shōyu* (soy sauce)
Pinch of *shichimi tōgarashi* (7-spice mixture; note at end of recipe)
Freshly toasted sesame seeds; optional

PROCEDURE:

If you are starting with whole vegetables (instead of peels), scrub the peels to be sure they're free of dirt and other gritty material. Slice the vegetables (carrots, burdock root, parsnips etc. into narrow julienne strips, approximately 1 and 1/4 inches long. If you are using bell peppers, de-seed them and slice into thin julienne strips. You should have about 2 cups of vegetable strips; spread them out on a towel to blot dry.

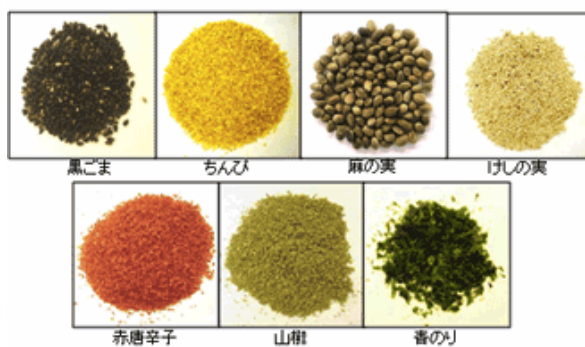
In a non-stick pan, heat the aromatic sesame oil and, over high heat, sauté the vegetables for 1 minute, stirring constantly. If some vegetables are more dense or tougher than others, add them to the skillet in order of tough-to-tender (parsnip and daikon take longer to cook than pepper strips, for example).

When all the vegetable strips have become slightly wilted, sprinkle with the sugar and toss to distribute well. Add the *saké* and continue to cook for a minute, deglazing the pan. Stir-fry for about 1 minute before adding the soy sauce. Stir to distribute; cook until the liquid is nearly gone and the vegetables are just tender.

Sprinkle with *shichimi togarashi* and toss to distribute well. Remove the pan from the heat and let cool to room temperature. Store extra *kimpira* in a glass jar in the refrigerator for up to 3 days. When serving, garnish with extra freshly toasted sesame seeds, if you like. Below, variations on the basic theme:



shichimi tōgarashi (7-spice mixture)



shichimi tōgarashi
(fiery 7-spice blend)
七味唐辛子

yuzu shichimi tōgarashi
(fiery 7-spice blend, extra yuzu)
柚子七味唐辛子

Top row, above: black sesame, *chinpī* (dried *mikan* or *yuzu* peel), *asa no mi* (flax seed), *keshi no mi* (white poppy seed)

Bottom row, above: *aka tōgarashi* (red chili pepper), *sanshō*, *ao nori* (sea herb)