

煮付け **NITSUKÉ** Soy-Simmering or Soy-Stewing

Soy-Simmered or Soy-Stewed Fish is most flavorful when cooked on-the-bone. In addition to slices with bone intact (some with roe, also), various fish parts including heads, collars, and fins are suitable.



snapper slices with bone (*tai kirimi*) mackerel (*saba*) "steaks" mackerel 2-strip fillet with bone one side



flounder (*karei*) flounder with roe (*komochi karei*) buri collars (*kama*) with fins



golden-eye snapper "helmet" (*kinmedai kabuto*) yellowtail chunks (*huri ara*)



Prepping *kinmedai*: removing scales (fish in bag to make cleanup easier) + split head (*kabuto*)
Frequently encountered at fish markets and packaged in supermarkets in Japan:

筒切り *tsutsu-giri* "steaks" (chunks cut from the body of the fish with the center bone intact)

二枚おろし *ni mai oroshi* (fillet with one side bone-in, the other without bone; slices cut from the half with bone-in)

兜 *kabuto* (literally "helmet") uses the heads of fish (especially in snapper family)

カマ *kama* (literally "hoe") collars (especially in yellowtail family)

鰈 (かれい) *karei* (flounder; right-eyed)

子持ちかれい *komochi karei* right-eyed flounder with roe

比目魚 (ヒラメ) *hiramé* (flounder; left-eyed)

鯛切り身 *tai kirimi* (snapper, slices with bone intact)

金目鯛 (キンメダイ) *kinmé dai* (golden-eye red snapper)

MASTER RECIPE for **SOY-STEWED FISH**

This recipe works especially well with fish in the SNAPPER FAMILY *tai & kinmedai* and *buri* YELLOWTAIL. Snappers are usually paired with *gobō* (burdock root) while *daikon* radish is more commonly paired with fish in the yellowtail family. The root vegetables are prepared in the same manner with parboiling in *togi-jiru* (the starchy water left after rinsing rice).

ACCENTS to consider adding: ginger, *yuzu* peel, *sanshō* berries, *kinomé* leaves

Makes 4-6 servings.

INGREDIENTS:

Boiling water to “frost” fish scraps; fresh icy cold water to rinse frosted fish

togi-jiru (starchy water from washing rice) to par-boil root vegetables:

2 (crayon-thick) foot-long stalks of *gobō* (burdock root), scrapped and cut into 2-inch lengths

OR

6 1/2-inch thick circles of *daikon* (radish), broad-peeled in a continuous sheet (reserve these for cooking in a separate dish); cut each peeled circle into half circles

1 small knob fresh ginger; peeled, grated and juice extracted (save peels for simmering sauce) OR *yuzu* peel OR *sanshō* berries or *kinomé* leaves

4-6 pieces fresh fish heads, collars, skeletons, slices with bone-in

Simmering/stewing liquid:

kombu (kelp), preferably a high glutamate variety such as *Rausu*, *Rishiri*, or *ma kombu*, large enough to line the pan you will use for cooking fish.

2-3 tablespoons water

3 tablespoons *saké* (rice wine)

3 tablespoons *mirin* (syrupy rice wine)

1 teaspoon sugar

4 tablespoons soy sauce

SHIMO FURI 霜降り (“frost falling”) Refers to the appearance of fish (or meat) that has been briefly dipped in scalding hot water to rid it of unpleasant odors and prevent unwanted scum from surfacing later when simmered.

Frost your fish scraps: Bring a large pot of water to a rolling boil. Remove the pot from the stove. If you have a strainer that can easily be dipped into the pot and then lifted to allow the scalding water to drain back into the pot, place the pieces of fish in the strainer in a single layer; “frost” the fish in several batches, if need be. Dip the strainer with the fish pieces into the scalding water and jiggle slightly to allow the scalding water to circulate about each piece. The surface of the fish pieces should turn white (appearing to be frosted). Lift the strainer up and allow excess hot water to drain back into the pot. Transfer the frosted fish to a bowl of icy water and quickly rinse away any scum. Drain and set aside.



An alternate method for frosting is to make a bag or sling from cheesecloth, wrapping the fish in it and placing the bag in your sink. Bring water to a boil in a kettle and drizzle the scalding water over the wrapped fish. When cool enough to handle, unwrap, remove the fish and rinse quickly under cold water and pat dry.

Par-boil your root vegetables:

Place the starchy rice-washing liquid (*togi-jiru*) in a deep pot just wide enough to hold the vegetables in a single layer. Slowly bring the liquid to a boil over medium heat. Large clouds of froth will form and rise in the pot (that is why you want to use a deep pot); adjust the heat to keep it from overflowing. Cook until the vegetables are tender, testing with a toothpick or bamboo skewer (there should be little resistance). Drain, and rinse away any scum clinging to the vegetables.



Assemble your simmering liquid:

Use a pan wide enough to hold the fish pieces in a single layer. Line the pan with the *kombu*. Add the water, *saké*, *mirin* and sugar and bring to a simmer over medium heat, stirring to dissolve the sugar. Add the fish and root vegetables. Place an *otoshi-buta* (dropped lid) over the fish and vegetables and return the stewing liquid to a simmer. Cook for 3 or 4 minutes until the fish is opaque.

Add the soy sauce, swirl the pan to insure even distribution. Replace the dropped lid and continue to stew for 5 or 6 minutes until the liquid gets slightly syrupy and reduced by about half.

Remove from the heat and allow the fish and vegetables to cool in the stewing liquid. During this time, the flavors will meld and deepen. If you wish to serve the fish hot, re-heat briefly before serving.

Divide the soy-drenched *kombu* and vegetables along with the fish into individual servings (garnish with *yuzu* peel). This soy-stewed fish will keep, refrigerated, for 2 or 3 days, intensifying in flavor and deepening in color with each re-heating.



Below, some additional words used to describe soy-simmered and/or stewed dishes:

BEKKO NI 鼈甲煮 (“Tortoise Shell”)

The name derives from the golden-reddish-brown color that soy sauce imparts in the simmering process. It is often, but not always, ginger-infused. Could be any species of fish, any part of the anatomy (collars, or *kama* are favorites).

SHIGURE NI 時雨煮 (“Autumnal Rain”)

The name signifies a ginger-infused soy-simmered dish. The autumn rain for which this dish is named is a stop-and-start, chilly drizzle. It is thought that the flavor of the ginger “chills” the palate in the same manner. Could be any species of fish, but flat fish most common, either whole (small) flounders, or sand dabs or fillets/steaks of larger fish (halibut, fluke), also roe-filled flatfish.

ARIMA NI 有馬煮 (named after a place, Arima)

This name is taken from the place, Arima, near Kyoto, which famous for its *sanshō* berries, in season late spring-early summer. Any species but snappers most common.

ARA NI アラ煮 (“simmered scraps”)

When using fish scraps such as heads, collars, and skeletons (at any time of year) to soy-stew, the resulting dish is called *ara ni*. The name has a down-home feel to it; it is sometimes available on pub menus. Many species prepared this way but oily fishes (mackerel, yellowtail) most common.