

## Umami Essence + Secondary Stock (broth)



### **Bannō-jōyu + Niban Dashi** 万能醤油・二番だし



I first published the recipe for this flavor-packed seasoned soy concentrate made with kelp, dried mushrooms, several kinds of dried fish and fermented soy in *WASHOKU: Recipes from the Japanese Home Kitchen* (Ten Speed Press) in 2005. At the time, the word *umami* had not yet become a buzzword in culinary circles and I hesitated to use it to describe this complexly flavored soy sauce. In the intervening years I have changed Seasoned Soy Concentrate (the original utilitarian name that appeared in *WASHOKU*) to **Umami Essence** (*umami* aptly describes the savory quality of this sauce). Unlike chemicals such as MSG, typically used in commercial “instant” stocks or flavor-enhancing products, the naturally occurring glutamates found in Umami Essence do not cause unpleasant side effects. After making the sauce, a secondary stock is made from the bits of soy-drenched kelp, dried mushroom and dried fish remaining in the pot. This stock can be used for soup, broth or dipping sauces for noodles. Here is what each of the 4 major ingredients contributes to the final sauce and stock:



**KOMBU** 昆布 (kelp) is a general flavor-enhancer with slightly briny overtones. If you can source a high-glutamate variety such as *Rausu*, *Rishi*, or *ma kombu* (pictured here) you will achieve greater intensity of flavor. Using several kinds together increases the complexity of flavor.



**HOSHI SHIITAKÉ** 干し椎茸 (dried black mushrooms) add woody, earthy overtones. If you can source *donko* 冬菇 (pictured here), a thick-fleshed variety with deeply creviced caps, you will achieve greater intensity of flavor. Break off the stems and use with broken bits of caps for this and other stock making; save whole caps to cook separately.



**IRIKO** いりこ • **NIBOSHI** 煮干し (two words for the same thing: whole dried sardines). They have a slightly funky smell but add powerful “meatiness” to the mixture. To keep bitterness at a minimum, remove heads and dried, crumbly, black innards before adding to the pot.



**ATSU KEZURI KATSUO** 厚削り鰹 thick chunks of dried bonito add distinctly smoky overtones. I sometimes refer to these thick shavings as “the bacon of the sea.” Make a generous batch of **Umami Essence**, transferring it into a tightly lidded glass jar for long term storage in your refrigerator. Practicing proper kitchen hygiene -- use a clean spoon each time you take some from the jar – the concentrate will stay fresh for 6 to 8 weeks.

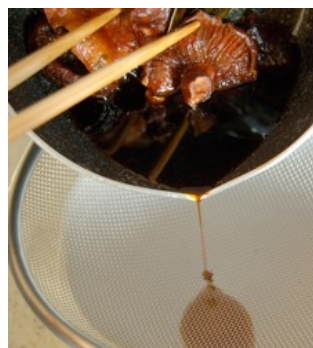


Place the following ingredients in a deep, sturdy pot:

- About 20 square inches *kombu* (kelp), preferably high-glutamate *ma kombu*
- 7-8 stems or 2-3 whole dried *shiitake* mushrooms, preferably thick-capped dried *donko shiitake* mushrooms
- 4-5 *niboshi* (dried sardines for stock-making), head and guts removed
- 5-6 large slab-like flakes or 1/4 cup crushed flakes *atsu kezuri katsuo* fish flakes
- 1 and 1/2 to 2 cups soy sauce
- 1/3 cup *saké*
- 1/3 cup sugar

Let the mixture sit for at least 10 minutes (and up to several hours) before placing the pot on the stove. Bring to a boil over medium heat. Adjust to simmer and cook for 5 minutes; strain.

A few drops of Umami Essence can enhance many dishes – from cold *tōfu* to simmering stews to steeping vegetables.



## 二番だし *Niban Dashi*

### Secondary Stock from leftovers of making Umami Essence

DO NOT DISCARD soy-drenched bits of dried kelp, mushrooms and fish (*niboshi* and *atsu kezuri katsuo*). Add several cups of cold water to the pot, and bring it rapidly to a boil. Adjust to a simmer and cook for 3-5 minutes. Strain, this time discarding the solid pieces.

Save the strained dark broth for up to 3 days, covered in the refrigerator (it does not freeze well). Use it, undiluted, as a soup broth either re-heated, or chilled.

