

## Vegan Seasoned Soy Concentrate *Shōjin Tsuyu no Moto* 精進つゆの素



(left) *kombu* kelp; (center) *shiitake* mushrooms; (right) finished VSSC

### Makes about 2 cups Vegan Seasoned Soy Concentrate

2 (2x3 inch) pieces *kombu* (kelp), preferably high-glutamate *ma kombu*  
12 (or more) stems **OR** 4 (or more) whole dried *shiitake* mushrooms, preferably thick-capped  
dried *donko shiitake* mushrooms  
2 cups soy sauce  
1/3 cup *saké*  
1/3 cup sugar  
2 tablespoons *mirin* (or *mizu amé*, or maple syrup); optional

Place the *kombu*, mushroom stems, soy sauce, *saké* and sugar in a small, deep saucepan. Cover, and let stand at room temperature for at least 3 hours, preferably 8-12 hours. Place over low heat and cook, stirring occasionally, until the liquid begins to simmer. Taste; if very salty, add *mirin* (or *mizu amé* or maple syrup) to mellow flavor.



Adjust the heat to maintain a slow, steady simmer. The sauce becomes foamy, and this foam tends to rise in the pan and can overflow the rim (that's why you want to use a deep saucepan). Simmer for about 5 minutes, or until greatly reduced and the sauce becomes slightly syrupy.

Remove from the heat; let the sauce cool naturally to room temperature. Strain. Pour the strained liquid into a glass jar. Cover the jar with a tight-fitting lid and store in the refrigerator for up to 1 month. Return the soy-drenched kelp and mushroom bits to the pot to extract further flavor for a secondary stock.

## Secondary Stock (*Niban Dashi*) 二番だし

Nothing goes to waste in the *kansha* kitchen. The soy-stewed bits of kelp and dried mushroom remaining after making VSSC can be coaxed into a fine secondary stock.



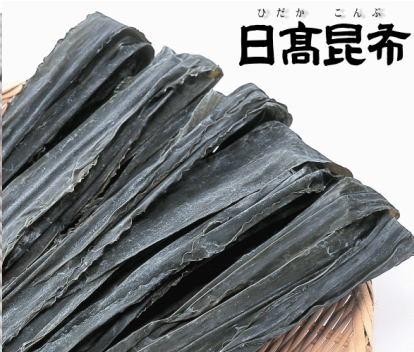
Pour 6 cups cold water over the kelp and mushroom bits and let stand for at least 10 minutes. Place the pan over gentle heat and cook slowly, adjusting as necessary to maintain a very gentle simmer.

Cook for at least 10 minutes or up to 30 minutes. Let cool to room temperature, strain through a fine-mesh strainer into a clean jar, cover tightly, label as *Niban Dashi* and refrigerate for up to 3 days.

The kelp and the mushroom bits will now have little flavor, though the kelp can be used to make the rice friends relish on page 152 *KANSHA* (Ten Speed Press, 2010), or it can be added to your compost heap with the mushroom bits.



*donko shiitaké* 冬菇椎茸



*Hidaka kombu* 日高昆布



*ma kombu* 真昆布

All varieties of *kombu* are rich in glutamates (*umami seibun*), the essence of flavor enhancement, though there are subtle differences in flavor among different varieties of *kombu*. *Hidaka* (above, center) is an all-purpose, rather mild variety; *ma kombu* (above, right) produces a more intensely flavored broth, though stock made with it is sometimes cloudy.

When you feel the cut edge of the kelp after extracting stock from it, you will notice that *ma kombu* is rather sticky while *Hidaka kombu* rarely is.