

中華そば *chūka Soba*

BUYING & STORING CHŪKA SOBA noodles:

Japanese *chūka soba* noodles, are sold as **kan men (dried noodles)**, and **nama men (fresh semi-dried noodles)**. Both types are typically packaged in pre-measured bundles called *taba*. *Kan men taba* (bundles) are about 50 grams (1.7 ounces) each; *nama men taba* are about 120 grams each (4.3 ounces).

FRESH *Nama men* noodles are typically sold refrigerated and should be kept in the refrigerator at home. Note the expiry date printed on the package and open by that date. Once a package is opened, boil and consume the noodles within 4-5 days. Freezing is not recommended for fresh noodles – the noodles clump together as they defrost.



NAMA MEN above from left: Hakata ramen, thin straight noodle, medium thin chigiri (curly) noodles, *tsuké men* for sauces.

Both *kan men* and *nama men* can be straight or curly (called *chigiri*, in Japanese) and all types come in several thickness. Choose your type: Thinner noodles tend to be easier to slurp while thicker ones are easier to pick up as a cluster; curly noodles have more surface area and sauces tend to cling to them more easily.

Store **DRIED** *kan men* noodles as you would any dried pasta: on a cool, dark, dry shelf. Once a package is opened, transfer any unused contents to a lidded glass jar, canister, or sealed bag (if there was a packet of drying agent that came in the original package of noodles include that in your storage container). Though spoilage is rare even a year later, old noodles tend to taste stale; its best to label with the date the package was opened, and use within a few months.



KAN MEN far left: thin straight bundles of 50 grams each.

KAN MEN near left: each bundle curly noodles 90 grams (usually sold with 2 bundles per pack).

COOKING, RINSING & DRAINING *CHŪKA SOBA* noodles:

Most noodle packages will provide a **suggested cooking time**. Because there are so many variables... the size of your pot... the strength of your stove's heat... the number of portions of noodles you will be cooking at the same time... use that **as an ESTIMATED TIME** from start to finish.

Fill a DEEP pot with plenty of water (about 6 quarts water in an 8-quart pot). Ideally the pot has a tight-fitting lid (it will be more fuel-efficient as water will come to a boil faster and the lid can trap in heat after cooking should the noodles need just a bit more time to become tender to the core).

Over high heat, rapidly bring the water to a rolling boil. Scatter the noodles as you add them to the pot and poke them occasionally to make sure they don't stick together. Lid your pot and when the water returns to a boil begin timing. Then, adjust the heat to maintain a steady, but less vigorous, boil.



Boil **FRESH *chuka soba*** for 45 seconds, then check for doneness.

Boil **DRIED *chuka soba*** for 2 minutes, then check for doneness.

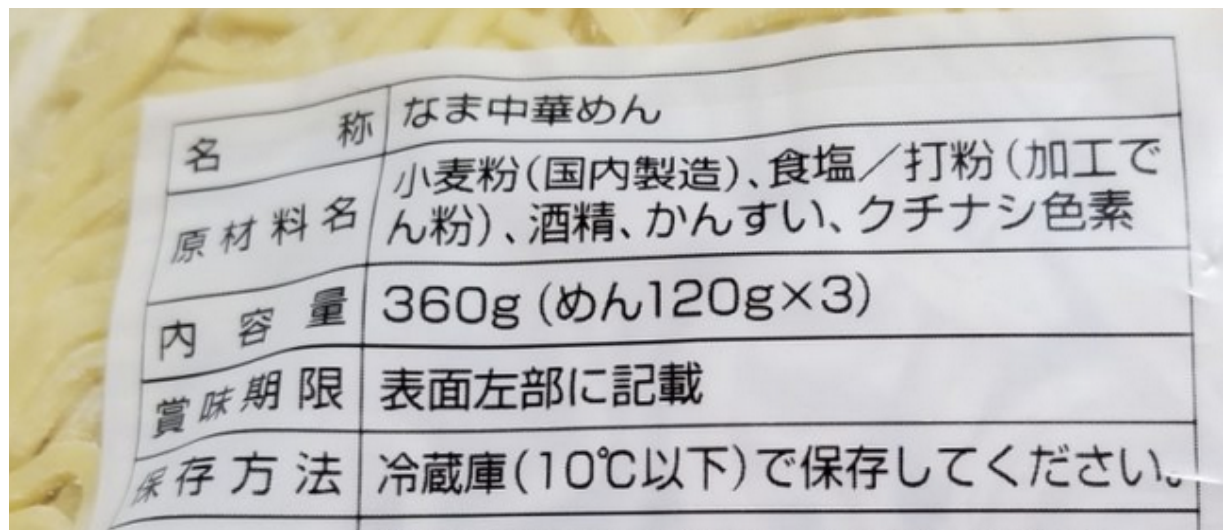
Test for doneness by lifting a noodle from the boiling water. Ideally, noodles should be cooked through (no hard core) but still firm; what in Italy is called *al dente*. If the noodle is too hard, cook for another 20-30 seconds before testing again. Continue to test at about 30-second intervals.



When done, drain and rinse well under running cold water to remove surface starch. Having a shower setting on your kitchen faucet is helpful: it rinses and cools the noodles quickly without excessive pressure. Drain again.

PANTRY NOTES:

Chūka soba noodles are made from WHEAT, salt and *kansui* (lye water). Egg is not usually used. Instead, the yellow color most often comes from a natural food dye, *kuchinashi* (Gardenia pods). Many *chūka soba* noodles also contain *saké kasu* (lees from *saké*-making).



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| 名 称 | なま中華めん |
| 原 材 料 名 | 小麦粉(国内製造)、食塩／打粉(加工でん粉)、酒精、かんすい、クチナシ色素 |
| 内 容 量 | 360g (めん120g×3) |
| 賞 味 期 限 | 表面左部に記載 |
| 保 存 方 法 | 冷蔵庫(10℃以下)で保存してください。 |