

## Ponzu ポン酢



This mixture of soy sauce and citrus fruit seems to have been inspired by 17<sup>th</sup> century visitors from Holland (*pons* means citrus fruit, in Dutch). Many versions of *ponzu*, including this one, mellow the simple salty-and tart sauce with smoky overtones by adding *katsuo-bushi* (fish flakes) and temper the tartness with a touch of sweet *mirin* or *mizu amé* (millet jelly or sugar).

In the *washoku* kitchen, this sauce is used primarily as a dip for one-pot *nabémono* stews, noodle dishes, or griddle-seared meat (WASHOKU pg 267: Flash-Seared Steak with Two Sauces). Additional uses include dressing *tōfu* or vegetable salads (mix equal quantities of *ponzu* with either a fruity olive oil or nutty sesame oil). A spicy variation of *ponzu* can be made by adding a few drops of fiery chili oil.

Makes about 1 and 1/2 cups

1 cup regular soy sauce

About 5 inches *kombu* kelp

1/2 cup (about 6 grams or 2 ounces) *katsuo-bushi* (dried fish flakes)

5 tablespoons freshly squeezed citrus juice, preferably *sudachi* or *kabosu* (a combination of grapefruit, lemon, orange and/or lime can approximate the flavor)

2 Tablespoons *mirin* or *mizu amé* (millet jelly or sugar).

Optional additions:

1/4 teaspoon grated citrus zest

1/4 teaspoon *raayu* chili oil

Pour soy sauce into a 1-quart saucepan and soak the *kombu* in it for at least 10 minutes (and up to 24 hours). Place the saucepan on the stove over very low heat and bring it to a simmer. Remove from the heat and add the fish flakes, allowing them to sink (about 3 or 4 minutes).

Strain the mixture into a glass jar (a mason jar is useful), discarding the fish flakes. Stir in the citrus juice. Stir in the *mirin* or millet jelly. Store any unused *ponzu* in a glass jar in the refrigerator for up to one month. Sediment may form on the bottom of your jar but is not a sign of spoilage.

For a fruitier (but slightly bitter) flavor profile, add the zest. To add a touch of fire, include the chili oil.