

SANKAI DASHI: Ichiban & Niban Stocks

(Primary & Secondary Mushroom & Kelp Stock)

SAN “mountain” 山 + **KAI** “sea” = 山海



ma kombu

Rausu kombu

Rishiri kombu

Hidaka kombu

Sourcing foods from oceans and streams... and combining them in the same dish with food harvested from the land is an underlying theme of the Japanese kitchen. Expressed as *UMI no SACHI*, *YAMA no SACHI* (the Bounty of the Seas, the Bounty of the Mountains) this notion honors ecologically sound farming practices while producing deeply flavorful food. *Sankai Dashi* made from dried *shiitaké* mushrooms (sourced from the land) and *kombu* (from the sea) combines woody and briny overtones. This combination produces two kinds of stock:

- ◆ Cold-water infusion/stock or ICHIBAN Sankai Dashi
- ◆ Slowly simmered broth/stock or NIBAN Sankai Dashi

Either or both can be used to make soups, stews, and sauces.

To make a liter/generous quart of ICHIBAN Sankai Stock:

Break off stems from 3 or 4 dried *shiitaké* mushrooms and set aside the caps for use in other recipes. Place the mushroom stems (and any broken bits of caps) with a 2-inch-long piece of kelp in a 2-quart (or liter) glass jar. Cover with 5 cups tap water. Soak the *shiitaké* stems and *kombu* in the water for at least 30 minutes (and up to 12 hours). Strain the liquid through cloth or paper (to remove any gritty material or sediment) as you transfer it to another glass jar. This strained liquid is your kelp enriched ICHIBAN mushroom stock.

Refrigerate (for up to 3 days) if you will not be using it right away. I do not recommend freezing; the woody-briny flavors will turn bitter.

Use any variety of *kombu* you wish but using a combination of types will yield a more complexly flavored stock. The list above shows 4 varieties of kelp with MA KOMBU (top) having the highest concentrate of *umami seibun* (flavor-enhancing glutamate), and HIDAKA KOMBU (bottom) the mildest.

To make a liter/generous quart of NIBAN Sankai Stock:

Place *ichiban dashi* in a pot on your stove and s-l-o-w-l-y bring the liquid to barely a simmer. Small bubbles beginning to migrate to the surface of your pot indicates you've reached the best temperature for extracting deliciousness (*umami seibun* glutamates) but not activating bitter tannins. Continue to gently simmer for about 10 minutes, skimming the surface to remove any "froth" that might appear.



Strain the liquid through cloth or paper (to remove any possibly remaining gritty material or sediment) as you transfer it to non-reactive container. This strained liquid is your deeply-hued and richly flavored NIBAN mushroom stock.

Refrigerate (for up to 4 days) if you will not be using it right away. I do not recommend freezing; the woody-briny flavors will turn bitter.

SUGGESTION: If a recipe calls for dried *shiitaké* mushroom caps to be softened, begin by snapping off the stems and setting them aside for use in making stocks another time; the caps alone will provide ample flavor to the dish you are making at that time, and the stems can contribute to other dishes in the future. Conversely, if the dish needs only mushroom stock and not the caps, use stems or broken bits for flavor and save the caps for another time.



2 varieties of dried *shiitaké* are generally available in Asian grocery stores: thick, mottled *donko* (left) and *kōshin* (right). The former are usually more costly and boast a meatier flavor.